Dupl. (3)
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THE NEW PEERAGE;

OR,

Our Eyes may deceive us.

A

COMEDY.

As it is performed at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

Written by Miſs HARRIET LEE.

LONDON:

Printed for G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, Pater-noſter-Row.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.

THOMAS KING, Esquire.

SIR,

IT is with the sincerest Gratitude I address to you a COMEDY, which owes its greatest Distinction to your Abilities. The Character in it which you condescended to accept, it was my Wish to mark with strong Virtues, and whimsical Singularities. The first I knew to be congenial to your Heart, and the second to your Talents. Permit me publicly to assure you of the Respect I shall ever entertain for both; and to subscribe myself, with great Regard,

SIR,

Your obliged and

Obedient Servant,

HARRIET LEE.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Apprehenſions that muſt ever attend a Woman on making a firſt Effort in the Drama, become juſtly heightened when ſhe thinks of committing it to the Preſs. Precluded, by Sex, from the deep Obſervation of Life, which gives Strength to Character, or Poignancy to Expreſſion, it will be difficult, even in her own Opinion, to ſupply the Deficiency; and it is from the Indulgence of the Publick only that ſhe can hope, what ſhe dares not expect, from their Judgment.

To the following Comedy every Encouragement was ſhewn by the Managers that Candor or Liberality could dictate. To them, as well as to the Performers, the Thanks of the Author are juſtly offered, not as a Compliment, but as a Debt. Nor can ſhe fail to regret, that the Buſineſs of the Scene did not allow Miſs Farren a more ample Scope for the Diſplay of thoſe Abilities which ſhe ſo eminently exerted.

PRO-

PROLOGUE,

Written by RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Eſq.

And ſpoken by Mr. WROUGHTON.

POETS were privileged in ev'ry Age
To nominate the Peerage of the Stage;
New Lords and Ladies—and when you join Hands,
As their *Supporters*, the Creation ſtands.
But our Stage-Lords are not like Lords of State,
For 'tis not Merit only makes *Us* great;
Forts well defended—hoſtile Fleets ſubdued—
Long Life devoted to our Country's Good—
Deſerts like theſe make not Promotion certain
To our great Houſe of Peers behind the Curtain:
No, Sirs; the Comic Muſe revokes theſe Rules,
And deals her Titles out to Knaves and Fools;
Her Lady Babs and Bettys—(fye upon her!)
Are not all Ladies of the pureſt Honor.
This Night our Comic *Circe* with a Word
Transforms a ſober Cit into a Lord;
To make the Metamorphoſis compleat,
Her real Lord ſhe ſends to Lombard-ſtreet:
Meanwhile the Moral of theſe Transformations
Teaches Content in your reſpective Stations.
You above Temple-bar, and you below,
Steer to the Weſtward you—you *Eaſtward-Ho!*
Keep wide apart, good Sirs, for your own Sakes;
Here Courts of Aldermen—there Clubs of Rakes;
Here Bank of England—there let Pharoahs ſit—
Wit without Money, Money without Wit.
To you, ye Lords, if Nature lends a Heart,
The World's great Stage preſents a leading Part;
Act up to your high Caſt—exert your Skill,
And ſtudy well the Characters you fill:
The Muſe ſhall prompt you in the glorious Cauſe,
And Theatres reſound with your Applauſe!
Hold faſt, ye Traders, to your own Domain,
The Seat of Credit, and the Source of Gain:
Whilſt you ſupport a Britiſh Merchant's Fame,
The Peerage cannot boaſt a nobler Name!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. Vandercrab (a Merchant)	Mr. KING.
Charles (his Son) - -	Mr. WROUGHTON.
Lord Melville, - -	Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Sir John Lovelace (Guardian to Lord Melville)	Mr. SUETT.
Medley, - -	Mr. PACKER.
Allen (Clerk to Vandercrab)	Mr. PHILLIMORE.
Virtu (Valet to Lord Melville)	Mr. LAMASH.
Servant to Sir John, -	Mr. BENSON.
Servants to Vandercrab, Meſſrs. WILSON, SPENCER, and ALFRED.	
Servant to Lady Charlotte,	Mr. LYONS.

WOMEN.

Lady Charlotte Courtley, (Niece to Sir John)	Miſs FARREN.
Miſs Harley, (Ward to Mr. Vandercrab)	Mrs. CROUCH.
Miſs Vandercrab (his Niece)	Mrs. HOPKINS.
Kitty, (Miſs Vandercrab's Maid) - -	Mrs. CUYLER.

THE

NEW PEERAGE, &c.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Vandercrab's *Houſe.*

Vandercrab *writing, while* Allen *waits.*

Vandercrab.

ALLEN.

Allen. Sir.

Vand. Did you give the bills to old Mortgage, as I deſired?

Allen. Yes, Sir, and he has engaged to tranſact the buſineſs.

Vand. You carried the letter to the India Houſe too?

Allen. I did, Sir; and ſettled with Sir Simon Squander: he ſeems much concerned at your determination of cloſing accounts:---I'm afraid his neceſſities preſs hard upon him.

Vand. Not another word upon that ſubject, Allen: modern neceſſity is but another term for

modern folly; and you may as ſoon hope to cure the one, as to relieve the other.

Allen. I ſuppoſe then, Sir, I may ſend away the young man about the India buſineſs? he ſeems to be in a melancholy way too.

Vand. Pſha! I hate melancholy: 'tis the mere ruſt of the mind, and is contracted by its inaction. However, you may bid him make out his petition---And---ſix children, d'ye ſay?

Allen. Seven, Sir.

Vand. Mercy on us! what has poverty to do with ſeven children! However, 'tis a rank ſoil, and weeds ſhoot up apace;---ſo lend him twenty pounds as if from yourſelf, and take his word for the payment when he is a Nabob.

Allen. Ah, Sir, you have a generous heart, and 'tis hard you will loſe the credit of it.

Vand. Not at all---not at all. When every ſpendthrift wears a laced coat, the truly rich man returns to plain ſerge and broad cloth: our feelings are *eſſentials* on which but a light tax is impoſed; when we indulge the luxury of diſplaying them, we generally pay dear for it.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir John Lovelace is over the way, Sir, and wiſhes to know if you are at home.

Vand. I ſhall be glad to ſee him *(Exit Serv.)*. In the interim, Allen, do you look to my letters; and if there are any from Paris, let me have them immediately---the approaching return of my ſon will be a jubilee for us all.

Allen. A jubilee indeed, Sir: 'tis a long time ſince my young maſter went to Amſterdam; fourteen years, I think.

Vand. Twenty, Allen, by paternal calculation. A wiſe man, however, will rather aim at preventing

venting an evil, than curing it; and, by ſending my ſon to Holland while a mere boy, I hope I have ſufficiently guarded his mind againſt the fopperies and extravagance of his own country.

Allen. Nay, I am ſorry to ſay, Sir, that many of our young men go abroad at an early age, and return never the wiſer for it.

Vand. What, a faſhionable tour! a flying excurſion through France and Italy; where they pick up a ſmattering of knowledge, which, like a jewel in the noſe of an Indian, tho' a pretty ornament in itſelf, becomes ridiculous or diſguſting from its ſituation. No, no; I ſent my ſon abroad to learn the art of ſaving money; I'll truſt his native ſoil for teaching him how to ſpend it. The twelve months tour I allowed him ſince his uncle's death, has, I ſuppoſe, compleated his knowledge of languages, and ——

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir John Lovelace, Sir.

Vand. Shew him up. [*Exit Servant.*] Do as I bid you, Allen. [*Locks his writing table, and,* Allen *going off, takes his own books of account under his arm.*] And now for a double doſe of nonſenſe, in character of beau and virtuoſo! But hold, here comes our Cupid of threeſcore:—Strange that this fellow ſhould be ſo fond of antiquity in every thing but his own perſon; and, while he devotes his mornings to *ſeeking* the ravages of time, ſhould be ſo conſummate a blockhead as to employ the evening in the more fruitleſs taſk of concealing them!

Enter Sir John.

Sir John, your ſervant; you look gaily.

Sir John. My dear friend---the greateſt curioſity has come acroſs me this morning ——

Vand. (Drily) Yes---and acroſs *me* too, Sir John.

Sir John. The moſt invaluable antique——

Vand. Mine is an antique too; but not quite invaluable, I confeſs.

Sir John. And if you can oblige me with a hundred pieces to compleat the purchaſe of this rarity---

Vand. Why really, Sir John, you and I are uſed to be frank with each other: Now, tho' I have no right to object to your intaglios, your gems, or your medals, yet, as a friend, give me leave to obſerve, that if your collection increaſes much farther, you will find an Engliſh guinea the greateſt rarity in it.

Sir John. That I have done ſo long, that the very want becomes reſpectable from its antiquity.

Vand. An extraordinary confeſſion, truly, from a borrower to a lender!

Sir John. Quite the reverſe, my old philoſopher. There was a time, indeed, when it was thought a good plea with a creditor, that he was the only one. Now, the largeneſs of the body becomes an argument for credit with the individual; and the weight of a man's debts is a ſurer teſt of his conſequence than the weight of his purſe.

Vand. Is it ſo? Why then, with your leave Sir John, you ſhall engroſs the one weight, and I'll content myſelf with the other.

Allen *enters, and delivers a letter.*

My ſon's hand! Have I your leave, Sir John?

[*Walks into another room reading it.*

Sir

Sir John. Why, what a Goth is this to have the care of a pretty girl! However, tho' I can't get the caſh, I may win the lady. Now if fortune---and, moſt apropos, here comes the goddeſs in her earthly ſhape of a Chambermaid.

Enter Kitty, *with her hat and cloak on, and a bundle of new novels under her arm.*

Why, Mrs. Kitty, you ſeem heavy laden! Mercy on us, how many back doors, garden gates, and run-away matches lie within the ſmall compaſs of thoſe fair hands! Prithee, child, are all theſe for thy lady?

Kitty. Oh yes, Sir; I and my lady are great readers.

Sir John. And you improve equally, I dare ſay. Now, Mrs. Kitty, if theſe ideal lovers ſhould have the complaiſance to admit a real one into their ſociety, ſurely you will not have the barbarity to refuſe him. [*Pulls a billet from his pocket, which he puts into one of the books.*

Kitty. Oh fye, Sir John!

Sir John. And this, dear Kitty, to pay the poſtage. [*Gives money, and as he offers to kiſs her, re-enter Vandercrab.*] Zounds! here's the old fellow.

Kitty. Lord, was ever any thing ſo mal-a-propos! [*Exit.*

Sir John. No misfortune, I hope, Mr. Vandercrab?

Vand. (wiping his eyes) Joy! Joy! Sir John! ---all joy! Charles is coming; he's in England ere this---coming to relieve his old father's cares, and to enjoy the fruits of them; none of your harum-ſcarum geniuſes, but a ſtaid, ſober youth, that had all the gravity of a Court of Aldermen in his face at two years old.

Sir

Sir John. Our families will afford a hopeful contraſt, Mr. Vandercrab; for I, you know, am in hourly expectation of my Ward, Lord Melville, from Paris.

Vand. Yes; to enter upon an eſtate, which, if I may judge from his drafts, he is ſcarce more impatient to poſſeſs, than to diſſipate; a hopeful contraſt indeed!---Well, if Charles does but anſwer my expectations, I promiſe myſelf the pleaſure of leaving poſterity---

Sir John. That *rara avis*, a fat knight, or a ſober Juſtice of Peace. Ha! ha! ha! Poſterity will be infinitely indebted to you---Ah! by the ſtep, this ſhould be the fair Sophia. *(Aſide.)* S'death and furies, Miſs Vandercrab with the book! who the plague ſhould have ſuſpected the old Duenna to be the reader of ſentimental love ſcenes, and delicate embarraſſments!

Enter Miſs Vandercrab, *childiſhly dreſſed in a ſaſh; her hair in ringlets, and a book in her hand; follow'd by Miſs* Harley.

Vand. How now! what have we here? Why Letitia, are you returned to your frock and leading ſtrings again?

Miſs Vand. (In a mincing tone.) Really, Mr. Vandercrab, I don't underſtand you; is there any thing ſo very extraordinary in a young perſon's being dreſs'd in a faſhionable ſtile?

Vand. Why no; not in a young perſon's being dreſſed in a faſhionable ſtile, I grant you: and if by your preſent appearance, my dear Letty, you mean to proclaim your *ſecond* childhood, I give you all imaginable credit for the humility of the avowal.

Miſs Van. Tramontane and ſhocking!

Sir

Sir John. Mr. Vandercrab, you know, Madam, is a cynic.

Miſs Van. A cynic! I'm ſure he's a bore.

Sir John. Happily defined, Madam; cynics were the bores of antiquity. If I did not fear being too intruſive, I ſhou'd requeſt the honour of knowing Miſs Vandercrab's ſtudies. *(Offers to take the book.)*

Miſs Van. A new work, Sir John, juſt eſcaped from the preſs. I never read old authors.

Vand. (Aſide) That's hard too, to pay no reſpect to our contemporaries. *(Walks aſide into the inner room.)*

Sir John. A work of fancy! Might I preſume, Madam?

Miſs Van. Fancy! wit! ſentiment! ſtay, you ſhall have a ſpecimen.

Sir John. Oh, by no means, Madam! Judgment and taſte, like Miſs Vandercrab's—

Miſs Van. When it has receiv'd the ſanction of yours, Sir John---*(Opens the book, whence the note drops)* Hey! how! what's that? A letter as I live!

Sir John (Aſide) Luckily, it has neither ſuperſcription or ſignature *(picking it up)*. Some ſtray memorandum, I preſume, Madam?

Miſs Van. Memorandum! Oh no, Sir John! no---perſecution, endleſs perſecutions. They have been my lot through life; and, I may venture to ſay, I have borne them with proper reſignation. By the bye, its charmingly perfumed; yet, I proteſt, I am ſo fluttered, I have ſcarce courage to open it.

Miſs Har. Allow *me*, Madam.

Miſs Van. Not for the univerſe, child---I have heard of love poiſons and charms convey'd in a billet-doux; and a Queen of France, who ſneezed herſelf to death, merely by the raſhneſs of opening

ing an enveloppe; No, no, I am the culprit, and I muſt encounter the danger. *(Opens and reads).*

Sir John. (Aſide) I am ſafe by her face; now to plead my cauſe with that fair inſenſible. And have *you*, Madam, never heard of poiſons convey'd in a billet-doux? *(To Miſs* Harley).

Miſs Har. Very frequently, Sir John; but when the antidote is near, we have little to fear from the venom. [*Aſide*] I think I underſtand, and am determined to mortify him.

Sir John. Cruel! are you proud of your inſenſibility?

Miſs Har. Oh no, Sir John, I never make a merit of obeying an impulſe. You ſeem affected, Madam?

Miſs Van. You know my weakneſs, child. And I think, Sir John, you will grant *that* to be written in a moſt ſuperior ſtile. *(Giving the letter).*

Sir John. Upon my ſoul, Madam, I believe I ſhall.

Miſs Van. I have ſeen the hand.

Sir John. No, have you?

Miſs Van. It is not the firſt I have received from the ſame perſon.

Sir John. (Aſide) The devil it is not!

Miſs Van. (Muſing) Yes, yes, I think I have him in my eye.

Sir John. In your eye, have you?

Miſs Van. However, I ſhall diſmiſs him.

Sir John. (Aſide) Thank you; but for fear of the worſt, he'll diſmiſs himſelf---Miſs Vandercrab, I have the honour to wiſh you a good morning.

Miſs Van. You'll not ſpeak of this little incident, Sir John.

Sir John. By no means, Madam.

Miſs Van. It might be injurious to one's reputation, you know.

Sir John. True, Madam; it might, as you ſay, be very injurious to the reputation *(Aſide)* of one of us.

Miſs Van. Honour, you know, Sir John——

Sir John. Oh honour! honour! honour! I aſſure, you Madam. [*Exit.*

Miſs Van. Why, Sophia, I proteſt you ſtand as inanimate as one of the ſtatues in Weſtminſter Abbey.

Miſs Har. Really, Madam, I cannot feel intereſted in a billet, which, had it been addreſſed to myſelf, I certainly ſhould have conſidered as an inſult, or a jeſt.

Miſs Van. An inſult or a jeſt! really, Miſs Harley, you have very extraordinary ideas; ay, and very extraordinary expreſſions too, Miſs Harley, let me tell you! If the obſcurity of your line of life has not accuſtomed you to ſuch addreſſes, you are not to ſuppoſe other people are to be equally inſignificant.

Miſs Har. (burſting into tears) The obſcurity of my line of life, Madam, though it may expoſe me to inſults, has not, it is plain, yet taught me how to bear them.

Miſs Van. Very fine, extremely grateful! How could the temper of an angel endure this? However, Madam, I ſhall withdraw; and when you have recover'd theſe *inſults*, as you term them, I preſume you will do me the honour of following me to my dreſſing room. [*Exit*

Enter Vandercrab.

Vand. My Niece's voice, I think; and not in the moſt harmonious key: So, the ſtorm has burſt, I ſee. Why, Sophy child, what is the matter?

Miſs Har. Nothing, Sir.

Vand. Now, that's just a woman's answer, when she means every thing. What perverseness possesses the sex, that they never love brevity but when it's of no service! What, I suppose, Letty and you have been at the old work?

Miss Har. I have no title to complain, Sir. My situation---

Vand. Your situation! psha! Your father was my old friend; and it was not his dying with his affairs a little deranged, that has made you less his daughter. But you have a thousand faults, child.

Miss Har. Faults, Sir!

Vand. Yes, faults, Sir! Why you're young, and handsome, and agreeable; are not these faults, do you think? aye, and devilish faults too, in the eyes of an old woman.

Miss Har. *(Smiling)* Of one of those faults, at least, time will mend me, Sir.

Vand. Aye, aye, time will mend you of them all, I dare swear; and then, like Letty, you'll find them in your neighbours. In the interim, as I know that one part of female grievances always lies in the pocket, there---*(gives her a bank note)* take that; and now if you do die of the spleen, it won't be for want of a new-fangled hat, or a pair of embroidered shoes. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE, *An apartment in an hotel.*

Enter Lord Melville *and* Charles Vandercrab, *preceded by a* waiter *with lights.*

Melv. Once more, dear Charles, welcome to all the luxurious comforts of an English hotel, and the dear congenial musick of our native tongue. Why, man, thou hast all the fogs of November in thy countenance; and art so errant a travelled coxcomb as to be disposed to quarrel with thy native coun-

country, tho' it has no worſe fault than that of having given thee birth.

Cha. Faith, my Lord, it has a much worſe.

Melv. How ſo?

Cha. It has given me nothing elſe.

Melv. There thou wrongſt it. For not to mention gold, that grand eſſence of exiſtence, it has beſtowed a moſt comfortable ſtock of Engliſh conſtancy, and Engliſh gloom. But is it poſſible the ſight of your Dulcinea has thrown you thus into the diſmals? How did you contrive to blunder upon her thus abruptly, when we have not either of us been two hours in London?

Cha. Faith by an accident ſimple enough.

Melv. As moſt love accidents are.

Cha. Lolling in my chaiſe with all the ſelf-indulgence of a ſolitary traveller, an entanglement of carriages ſtopt mine at the bottom of the Haymarket; and popping my officious head out of the window, I nearly demoliſhed the powdered fabrick of an old beau, who had taken the opportunity to ſwear at his boobies behind.

Melv. Well, well; I ſuppoſe you did not fall in love with him?

Cha. Oh! Melville! what a ſoft, what a tranſporting emotion ſeized upon my whole frame, when by his ſide I diſcerned all the glowing graces of youth and beauty in the perſon of Lady Charlotte Courtly!

Melv. Admirably paired! Venus, and Anchiſes; the latter depicted in the ſhape of her worthy uncle, and my guardian, Sir John Lovelace, I preſume; but proceed.

Cha. My heart flew to my eyes with an ecſtaſy that reſolved every ſenſe into ſight. She bent forward at my gaze, but either did not, or would not know me; while I, tranſported with pleaſure, thought every link-boy a Cupid, and

every flambeau a torch ſtolen from the altar of Love.

Melv. Braviſſimo! a poet---why, is there magic enough in woman to fire thee to this?

Cha. Rather aſk, is there any magic *but* woman, that could do it? In ſhort, Melville, I love her to diſtraction; abſence had indeed ſcattered aſhes over the flame, but the treacherous embers are ſtill alive, and blaze with the ſlighteſt fuel.

Melv. Or rather without any. A lover's ardor, Charles, is a ſort of phoſphorus, and will kindle, indeed, on mere air; but the flame is of ſo harmleſs a nature, that it may play long enough upon the heart, without any danger of impairing it.--- Did ſhe not refuſe you at Paris, and ſeriouſly too?

Cha. It is not in her nature to be ſerious for a moment: that ſhe refuſed me is certain; though I am inclined to believe, the rejection proceeded rather from her pride, than her heart; but the very air of a French metropolis was uncongenial with matrimony; and flattered, followed, and admired as ſhe was by every coxcomb, I proved myſelf the moſt abſurd of the group, when I thought for a moment of engroſſing her.

Melv. But her objections, Charles!---

Cha. Amidſt the real ones, pride was the firſt; but, the oſtenſible were as numerous as her caprices; they changed with the caſt of my countenance, the cut of my coat, the dreſſing of my hair; in ſhort, I roſe and fell alternately, in the thermometer of her heart, till the chilling atmoſphere of vanity drove me to the very freezing point. I then quitted the purſuit, flattered myſelf I could forget her; and fled to Bruſſels, in the hope of overtaking you.

Melv. Since which time, Madam Fortune has amuſed

amuſed herſelf with keeping us in perpetual chace, till we have once more blundered upon each other, in the gay precincts of St. James's. And now, Charles, what are your plans?

Cha. I have none.

Melv. Pſha! hang that Dutch face! thou art relapſing into all the gloom of a compting-houſe, whence I hoped to have made a reſcue of both mind and body. I found thee at Dreſden, ſtiff, antiquated, provincial ——

Cha. And you will leave me, my Lord——

Melv. Um---Let me ſee what! why, a good decent young fellow; with an eaſy aſſurance, a degagee air, and rather more than a faſhionable ſtock of morals: in ſhort, an humble imitator of myſelf.

Cha. Modeſt.

Melv. And true too. Pluck up thy courage then, man, in honour of thy tutor; and, if thou art ſo deeply enamoured, e'en follow thy nymph, till, in mere fatigue, ſhe give up the chace.

Cha. All rhodomontade, my Lord; if ſhe could reject me in a country where national *politeſſe* dignifies every adventurer with a title, and ſubordination was for a time ſunk in wealth, what hope can I have of ſilencing her pride, when the broad ſun-ſhine of truth will proclaim me in capitals, *Charles Vandercrab, merchant and banker*, of Lombard-ſtreet!---'Sdeath! if I had the wit of a Cheſterfield, and the wealth of a Croeſus, that confounded appendage would undo me.

Melv. A thought ſtrikes me---we are but juſt arrived, and our perſons yet equally unknown: Sir John Lovelace, my preſent guardian, has never even ſeen me, as the truſt devolved to him during my travels. What ſay you then to being dubbed right honourable by a peerage of our own, and becoming a coxcomb upon privilege?

Cha. I don't underſtand you.

Melv.

Melv. Why, thus then. Lady Charlotte's objections to you, may all, I think, be conſolidated into that freezing epithet, *a cit.* Suppoſe you borrow my title for a few days; rally her former rejection of you, under the name of Vandercrab; and, by appearing in a point of view that does not alarm her pride, give yourſelf the chance of knowing whether you have touched her heart.

Cha. The plan is promiſing I muſt confeſs; but the execution——

Melv. Oh! the eaſieſt thing in life. Our acquaintance in England are at preſent very few, and thoſe only a ſet of thoughtleſs young fellows, who will readily countenance a frolic ſo common.

Cha. Yet, would it not be ungenerous?

Melv. Mere punctilio---If you find her ſtill indifferent, you are but where you were, you know; and, my life for it, Charles, when ſhe has once peep'd at thee, thro' the medium of faſhion, ſhe will diſcover a thouſand charms, which were loſt at the former immeaſurable diſtance. And, prithee, where will be the harm of converting a poor ſpinſter of quality into the wife of an affluent Britiſh merchant?

Cha. I like your ſcheme, and am half determined to adopt it: but what is to be done with my father? To diſappoint his paternal——

Melv. Another doſe of the ſentimentals, and I am off. If your own paſſion, however, is not powerful enough, prithee ſave your friend, who is not in love, from the horrors of matrimony. Sir John Lovelace, I can tell you, has malicious deſigns, in favour of his niece, upon the perſon and fortune of your humble ſervant.

Cha. That argument is worth a thouſand: therefore, dear——

Melv. Apropos: I think I ſhall want a name; and, as two Soſias will rather mar, than make

our

our Comedy, you ſhall lend me yours: beſides, I can manage the good folks in Lombard-ſtreet.

Cha. With all my heart!---ſo, dear Charles---

Melv. And, dear Melville! *(They bow, and ſhake hands affectedly)* I give your Lordſhip joy of your new creation.

Cha. Before we part, we'll take a little refreſhment, over which we may exchange our credentials.

Melv. With all my heart: you, I ſuppoſe, will take up your abode, for the night at leaſt, in this hotel.

Cha. Certainly.

Melv. And I mine under the roof of my new father. So, hey for Lombard-ſtreet!---*Courage & Eſperance.*

[*Exeunt.*

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Lady Charlotte's *Houſe.*

Lady Charlotte *and* Miſs Harley.

Lady Charlotte.

AND ſo Charles is not quite tramontane at laſt! Poor Mr. Vandercrab! to have ſpent fourteen years in the very rational attempt of converting his only ſon into a plodding Mynheer, and to find him return at laſt a human being, is really a moſt inſupportable misfortune!

Miſs Har. He thinks it ſo, I aſſure you: nay, if his preſent humour holds, I queſtion whether he will not ſuſpect their conſanguinity; and, with a modern ſpecies of philoſophy, begin to doubt every thing it is not convenient to believe.

Lady Char. On the article of conſanguinity, my dear, I recommend him to a ſtill more faſhionable ſyſtem, which inclines us to *believe* every thing it is not convenient to doubt. But their meeting ——

Miſs Har. A ſcene of ludicrous diſtreſs on Mr. Vandercrab's ſide, that defies all deſcription. For the firſt hour, aſtoniſhment and ſpleen ſeemed to chain up his faculties; and, but for the ſilent working of his muſcles, an indifferent ſpectator might have ſuppoſed him pleaſed.

Lady Cha. The ſecond, however ——

Miſs Har. He amply indemnified himſelf for paſt taciturnity; till, finding reſentment and expoſtulation equally thrown away, he now prowls about the houſe like an angry maſtiff, who only wants his muzzle taken off to ſnap at every paſſer-by: uncertain which moſt to wonder at, the freſh imported folly of his niece, the gay effrontery of his ſon, or the more ſolemn foppery of a travelled valet.

Lady Char. Oh, the pleaſant group! how I envy you the ſatisfaction of laughing at them! and, apropos of travellers, Lord Melville is in England.

Miſs Har. I give you joy of it.

Lady Char. Joy, child! ſorrow, mortification, dulneſs: in one word, matrimony! He is returned at the very moment, when novelty, dreſs, and diſſipation, had placed me at the pinnacle of ton; and, from a firſt rate coquette, I am to be metamorphoſed into that horrible creature, a wife.

Miſs Har. And the magician by whom the metamorphoſis is to be effected, a man of rank, young, rich, and handſome: terrible misfortunes indeed! But, are you then contracted to him?

Lady Char. By that worſt of all contracts, neceſſity. My fortune, you are not to learn, is bounded: a cruel argument for confining my feelings, while it gives full range to my follies: and as Melville has nothing to do but to chooſe ſome woman who may aſſiſt him to diſſipate his, why, our friends have very judiciouſly ſelected me, as the one on earth beſt calculated for that purpoſe.

Miſs Har. And your Ladyſhip, with marvellous ſelf-denial, has ſubmitted to the plan.

Lady Char. Ah, my dear Sophia, this is a tender point for raillery. Talk to me of your Se-

necas, and your Epictetus's! o' my word I believe there never was a philoſopher that had half the ſelf-denial of a modern Belle.

Miſs Har. So curious an aſſertion is, I think, well worth proving.

Lady Char. Oh, nothing on earth more eaſy; a woman of ton lives in a perpetual ſtate of warfare with the whole five ſenſes!

Miſs Har. Indeed!

Lady Cha. Ay, indeed; though, if ſhe is truly a woman of ton, I grant you---ſhe ſometimes loſes the victory.

Miſs Har. Ha! ha! ha!

Lady Cha. As dreſs, flattery and conſequence are the ſole aim of her exiſtence, ſhe muſt neither ſee, hear, or ſpeak as nature directs: She muſt ſhut her eyes to all the graces of form, and her ears to all the charms of wit; except when they are to be found in a heavy purſe, or a Court calender. She muſt ſigh for an equipage, pant for a title, and be in raptures at a ſtar---tho' ſhe is ready to hang herſelf in the garter annexed to it.

Miſs Har. (*laughing*) A moſt enviable ſituation truly! And pray, what are the rewards that attend all theſe wonderful inſtances of philoſophy? For I really think they deſerve ſome.

Lady Char. What reward a pretty woman receives for the ſacrifices ſhe makes to her vanity: Innumerable, my dear. Is ſhe not flattered, careſſed, adored? Does ſhe not create a buzz when ſhe appears, a ſigh when ſhe diſappears? Her dreſs becomes a ſtandard, her perſon a model; nor was the plume of Alexander ever half ſo ſure a badge of conqueſt as that which adorns her.

Miſs Har. For ſo animated a portrait am I to give your fancy or your vanity moſt credit?

Lady

Lady Char. Why, no abſolutely either; there is a certain reſtleſineſs of mind, that wears the garb of every folly by turns. I have been gay, ſplenetic, humble, and vain, all in the courſe of an hour: In ſhort, Melville is returned an age too ſoon!

Miſs Har. Rather an age too late, if I judge right; for after all theſe brilliant arguments, Lady Charlotte, I know only a ſingle reaſon that can be aſſigned for a woman's wiſhing one agreeable man at a diſtance.

Lady Char. The having wiſh'd another near I preſume;---No bad concluſion, Sophia, in the days of your grandmother; but hearts are no longer pretty baubles to give away; they are petrifactions, carefully locked up in Chryſtal; we ſometimes, indeed, fall in love with ourſelves in the mirror of another, and ſo fancy we make an exchange, when we are only admiring a reflection.

Miſs Har. Your ſyſtems are admirable! Vanity is then the ſole baſis of happineſs.

Lady Char. A baſis, at leaſt, more *univerſal*, than any yet diſcovered! but, apropos of hearts, Sophia---look well to your own, for Charles Vandercrab is a pretty fellow.

Miſs Har. And much too rich for me to aim at; but you know him then?

Lady Char. Why, we met often in Paris; an agreeable perſon, and a faſhionable mode of life, gave him an introduction into the firſt circles there. The creature has even ſome *ton* in him, and had he been any thing but Bourgeois, I might have condeſcended---

Miſs Har. (warmly) Indeed!

Lady Char. To have rendered him miſerable. *(Aſide)* I don't above half like that *indeed*. She is pleaſed with him already.

Miſs Har. If from the little I have ſeen of Charles, I was entitled to judge, I ſhould pronounce him elegant, well-bred, and manly. His ſenſe is without parade, and his affectations rather wear the air of playfulneſs, than vanity.

Lady Char. I am afraid, my dear, you have omitted the greateſt of his recommendations. Come, come, Charles has not been to Paris in vain. He has gallantry too.

Miſs Har. To be frank with you then, he has---bleſs me, you are pale!

Lady Char. (Diſordered and throwing away her bouquet) Theſe odious flowers! I don't know why I wear them! I hate every thing that is natural!

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Lord Melville, and Sir John Lovelace, Madam.

Miſe Har. Sir John! The being on earth I would moſt wiſh to avoid!

Lady Char. You don't go.---

Miſs Har. You know my objections to the Baronet; and, at preſent, my time is not my own. Permit me, however, to aſſure you of my gratitude for the generous protection you have offered me; ſhould the difficulties of my ſituation increaſe, I may perhaps accept it. Another time I can be more explicit. [*Exit.*

Lady Char. So Charles is returned to England! Well, and what then? Why then could I die with ſpleen that any woman but myſelf ſhould dare to like him. To be liked by him too---ſtill more inſupportable! Yet, Sophia is young, handſome, amiable---And he is---Pſha!---I'll think

no

no more of him. *(Turns round on* Sir John, *and* Charles; *who enters gaily dreſſed as* Lord Melville.*)*

Lady Char. Oh!

Sir John. Walk in, my Lord. *(Bows formally)*

Cha. (Aſide) That emotion looks well; her colour too changes! Now would I give fifty pieces that mine were immoveable.

Sir John. Time, I ſuppoſe, has quite effaced the features of Lord Melville from your memory, Lady Charlotte.

Cha. Pardon me, Sir John! her Ladyſhip's feelings have extended her memory to a moſt unfaſhionable length, if I may judge by the ſtart of diſtaſte with which I was received.

Lady Char. Rather the ſtart of ſurprize, Sir. I would welcome you to England, if I knew by what name.

Cha. Name, Madam! Oh! a mere idle diſtinction! Travellers have a hundred; but ſince the humble one of Charles was offenſive in Paris, he now ſoars a pitch higher, and has the honour of being introduced by that of Melville.

Lady Char. Lord Melville! Impoſſible!---

Sir John. Why, now where does the impoſſibility of it lie, I wonder!

Lady Char. I give you credit for the frolic, Sir; and will ſpare you the continuance of it.

Sir John. Why truly there is a frolic, or a freak on ſome ſide; you *do* know, and you *don't* know, and you bluſh, and you ſtammer, and you bow.---Lady Charlotte give me leave once more to introduce Lord Melville to you; my ward, child; Lord Melville.

Cha. When laſt we met, Madam, I had love enough to think yours the firſt object in life; and vanity enough to ſeek it under an obſcure name: 'Twas an unfaſhionable idea, and I have renounced

renounced it. Come, come, Lady Charlotte, that frown has too much of the Engliſhwoman in it. It muſt poſitively diſappear.

Lady Char. (Withdrawing it) Ridiculous! *(Aſide)* It is plain then I have been duped. But pride aſſiſt me!

Cha. Nay, fear me not, Madam: I am no longer the ſighing, languiſhing, *vulgar* enamorato, who importuned you with attentions: I have changed my nature with my name. I can be careleſs, indolent, forgetful! can unite the oppoſite extremes of the French and the Engliſhman; and, while the foppiſh officiouſneſs of the one bids me fill up the number of your ſlaves, the phlegmatic indifference of the other ſhall make me content to ogle you through an opera glaſs.

Lady Char. Ha! ha! ha! Now ought I to humble your vanity, by proteſting, like Falſtaff, "that I knew you all along:" but as it is the laſt time, I think I will be ſincere, and own myſelf deceived.

Cha. How! the laſt?

Lady Char. Oh, poſitively the laſt. What! a man of rank expect ſincerity! When you appeared in the middle claſs of life, indeed——

Cha. True, your Ladyſhip was then ſo liberal of the medicine, that, though it cured a malady of the heart, I have deteſted it ever ſince.

Lady Char. (Aſide) Now is he ſo agreeably ſaucy, that, if there is art or coquetry in woman, I muſt recal him.

Sir John. But the news of Paris, my Lord.

Cha. A mere ſcene of ſtill life, Sir John. The women are ſtudying metaphyſics and chymiſtry; the men deep in the ſciences of tea-drinking, and horſe-racing. Nothing new on the article of faſhions, but that the Count d'Artois

tois intends to bring in ſquare beards, and ſharp-toed ſhoes!

Sir John. The devil he does!

Cha. For the benefit of antiquated batchelors, and gouty beaux.

Sir John. Hum!

Lady Char. But ſcandal, my Lord---

Cha. An obſolete word, Madam, grown (ſtrange to tell!) ſynonimous with truth! Gallantry is now an eſtabliſhed principle; and the ladies complain, that if ſome of their ſex do not turn prudes, they will be in danger of loſing the uſe of their tongues.

Lady Char. Horrible! I enter my proteſt againſt every attack upon female privileges! Sir John, have you nothing to ſay againſt this project of the Count's? But now, I think of it, all your heroes and philoſophers have thoſe filthy long beards. What a ſingular confuſion will it cauſe in your cabinet, to ſee your Nero's, your Galba's, and your Conſtantines, converted into a range of modern fine gentlemen!

Sir John. The modern fine gentlemen are infinitely indebted to your Ladyſhip for the compariſon.

Lady Cha. Why, no, not much I am afraid, uncle; for till they bear ſome better affinity to the antients, than in their faces, they can at beſt only paſs for models in bronze. (*Sir* John, *looking at his watch*) Od ſo! my Lord, my time's expired!

Char. By the killing appearance of your Ladyſhip, I ſhould ſwear you meditated a conqueſt to-night. (*Aſide*) Now could I curſe my own jealous pate, for wiſhing to know where ſhe was going.

Lady Cha. (*Aſide*) That queſtion beſpeaks anxiety (*aloud*) One conqueſt, my Lord! a thouſand!

ſand! We are at preſent rival potentates, and muſt divide the empire of faſhion.

Char. (*careleſsly*) For the Opera?

Lady Cha. (*More negligently*) No.

Char. For Lady Sparkle's, perhaps?

Lady Cha. No---o---ha! ha! ha!---take care, my Lord---careleſs, indolent, forgetful---you know (*mimicking him*) your leſſon---your leſſon, I beſeech you.

Char. (*Kiſſing her hand*) This, to imprint it on my heart!

Lady Char. A very modiſh ſpecies of forgetfulneſs, yours I find, which is to *increaſe* in proportion to the favours conferred. [*Exit.*

Char. Charming creature! Now fortune and love be propitious!

Sir John. Square beards, and ſharp toed ſhoes; zounds my toes ach at the idea. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *A Hall in* Vandercrab's *Houſe*;

Bells ring alternately on each ſide the Stage; a Valet runs acroſs with curling irons, &c. After which, Vandercrab *enters, muſing.*

He's a wiſe father that knows his own child, ſays the proverb; may be ſo! but he is a deviliſh unlucky one ſometimes. Now I ſhould be a happy dog, if mine was a ſtranger to me; here have I been flattering myſelf with the hope of bringing up a young fellow, that ſhould ſhame the coxcombs of the age, and he is returned the eſſence of them all! Why, without having been four and twenty hours in the houſe, he has corrupted every living creature in it; and in four and twenty more, I ſuppoſe, I ſhall not know my own territories! There is Letty, now, plaiſtering her old-faſhioned face with French waſhes

waſhes on one ſide; but then I could have forgiven *her*, becauſe ſhe is a woman; and abſurdity's natural to her: but for the young prig there--

Enter Kitty, *with band-boxes, and followed by a girl with more.*

Well, Mrs. Frippery! whither ſo faſt?

Kitty. Lord, Sir! did not you hear my Lady's bell?

Vand. I muſt have been deaf elſe; but what have we got here?---contraband goods? (*To the girl*)

Kitty. Only a few caps, and a new-faſhioned handkerchief from the Milliner's, in Cornhill. Dear, good Sir, don't keep me; come along, child. [*Exeunt.*

Vand. Keep you! not I truly. (*Bells ring on both ſides*) There they ago again, ding-dong---S'life, I had better live in the ſteeple of a church! there, at leaſt, they pull in tolerable time, and tune. Here is nothing but diſcord, eternal diſcord on my ears, and on my ſoul---

Enter a Servant.

Well, Sir, what's your buſineſs?

Serv. Sir, Alderman Brewit ſends his ſervice, and if you are not engaged, he means to ſup with you to night, in order to ſee my young maſter.

Vand. By all means, he is a curioſity well worth ſeeing; and your old maſter will be a curioſity too by that time I ſuppoſe: we ſhall all be curioſities. Folly is epidemical, and we ſhall be infected with the ſpirit of puppyiſm. Methinks, my own Jerom begins inſtinctively to ſprout out into a pair of pigeon wings. Well---tell---but ſtay---I ſuppoſe I muſt be a man of *ton* too, and ſend a meſſage to my own ſon, a-d---

Enter Virtu *behind.*

There goes one of his puppies; with the ſolemnity of a Sage, and the ſtrut of a dancing maſter. (Virtu *croſſes the Stage*) Here you, Mr. Don Pompoſo, go tell your maſter that I ſhall have company to ſupper to-night, and deſire he will be at home. [*Exit* Virtu.

Enter Second Servant.

Well, Sir, what the devil do *you* want?

Serv. Sir, Mrs. Fuſty, and the three young Miſſes, ſend their compliments---

Vand. Out of my ſight, ſirrah. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter third Servant.

Serv. Sir, Mr. Deputy Saveall---

Vand. So, ſo, ſo---Why, I ſhall have all the fools from Temple Bar, to Alderſgate-ſtreet, aſſemble in a body to ſee my Ouran Outang, my man monkey here.

Re-enter Virtu.

Vir. Sir, my Lord, ſends his comp---

Vand. Your Lord, Blockhead!

Vir. (*Aſide*) Ah *quelle bête!* Almoſt betrayed ourſelves, 'pon honour. *Une facon de parler Monſieur*--a mere phraſe, Sir; abroad we always uſe it.

Vand. Do you? Why, then I deſire you will forget it, now you are at home. Your meſſage, Sir?

Virtu. He is diſtreſſed, Sir, that he ſhould have engaged himſelf to dine with Lord Melville at ſeven; but if you will have *la bonté* to order ſupper at three in the morning, he will do *ſon poſſible*, not to derange the regularity of your family.

Vand.

Vand. Civil Coxcomb! the regularity of my family's vaſtly indebted to him; Sup at three in the morning! I will give him leave to ſup upon me, if he does; why, my blood runs cold at the bare idea; my heart turns to an iſicle, and my money trembles in the coffers; and, you Mr. Powderpuff, I ſuppoſe are laughing at me? (*To* Virtu)

Virtu. Laughing! me, Sir! Oh no, Sir---no ---I never laugh!

Vand. No! why, truly by your appearance, you ſeem better calculated to *make* the joke, than to enjoy it; and pray, Sir, where might your maſter pick you up?

Virtu. Pick me up, Sir! Really I have not the felicity of underſtanding you. I did, my Lord, the honour---I mean---I did myſelf the honour of travelling with my Lord——

Vand. Your Lord again, Monkey!

Virtu. (*Aſide*) Conſequence and murder will out. This ſavage certainly ſuſpects; ſuppoſe I ſound him a little? I am afraid, Sir, you diſcover ſomething--- a --- rather --- a--- uncom --- mon---about me?

Vand. Very uncommon, upon my ſoul, Sir. Pray, may I aſk, whether you are an Engliſhman, or a Frenchman, or a kind of a heterogeneous animal?——

Virtu. I am afraid, Sir, I had *le malheur*, the misfortune, to be born in England.

Vand. Are you ſo, Sir? I am afraid you have alſo the misfortune to be a ſcoundrel; for I never yet knew an Engliſhman aſhamed of his country, till his country had cauſe to be aſhamed of him. Leave the room, Sir. [*Exit Virtu.*

A Servant *enters, and delivers a letter* to Vandercrab.

Vand. What's here? a letter from my old friend Medley! (*reads*) "hum! um! um! Juſt arrived "from Amſterdam---um---failure of a great "houſe there; impatient to ſee Charles and you "at the London Tavern." Odſo! this is beyond my hopes! my old correſpondent, and Charles's beſt friend in Holland! if any body can cure his folly, Medley's the man; I'll go and fetch him immediately, and between us we'll lay ſome plot, that may betray my puppy into common ſenſe. [*Exit.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III.

An Apartment in Vandercrab's *Houſe.*

Medley *and* Vandercrab *diſcovered ſitting.*

Medley.

CHARLES is a long time coming tho'! odd he little ſuſpects that his old friend and favorite Medley's here! Ah! Mr. Vandercrab, you're a happy father! as hopeful a young fellow!——

Vand. (*Aſide*) As e'er an unhang'd ſpendthrift in London; now can't I for the ſoul of me muſter courage enough to let him into the truth.

Med. A great help to you in the banking buſineſs, I ſuppoſe? you uſed always to ſay, Charles would have a head at calculation.

Vand. (*Aſide*) Did I? then I am ſure I had none. I don't believe the dog knows his multiplication table, or can caſt up his tailor's bill.

Med. It is now juſt a year ſince he left Holland, and went to Germany; I remember dining with him the day before, at Mynheer Grandergrous's. Ah! we had a comical day faith! Old Grandergrous talks of it ſtill; there were juſt, I think, a dozen of us at dinner; we drank juſt two dozen of wine; ſmoaked juſt two dozen pipes; and ſpoke as it might be, about two dozen words; it was a very ſociable day indeed--but a--hey-day!--What's the matter with you?

Vand.

Vand. (*Wiping his eyes*) Merry times, very merry times; give me your hand, my old friend; between ourſelves, Charles is a good deal altered.

Med. Turning beau, I ſuppoſe? nay he had his frolicks then.

Vand. You won't know him again I'm afraid.

Med. Queues his hair, I warrant?

Vand. No----now I am ſure you won't know him.

Med. Never takes a pipe, I ſuppoſe?

Vand. A halter as ſoon.

Med. Come, come, my good friend, never put on ſuch a long face! I ſee how the matter ſtands! but I'll be hanged if Charles don't mend.

Vand. Will you? Slife that's kind; but I wou'd not take your chance for all that.

Med. What! I ſuppoſe you think your ſon in the high-road to ruin, becauſe ſome pretty milliner's girl, with a pair of ſparkling eyes, has ſeduced him into a yard or two extraordinary of black ribbon to tie his ſhirt collar with?

Vand. Black ribbon to tie his ſhirt-collar with? ---Oh! Lord! oh Lord!

Med. (*Looking at his watch*) Odſo, I promiſed to meet old Stock at five, and it's paſt that hour already. Well, you'll tell Charles where I am; he'll be vaſtly glad to ſee me, quite overjoyed to ſee me, I'm ſure; ſtay, don't I hear a coach ſtop (*a thundering rap at the door*) Heyday! Why, is the premier coming to borrow money of you to pay the national debt? What a devil of a hurly-burly's here!

Vand. (*Aſide*) Charles's puppy, as I live, practiſing his new-fangled flouriſh upon the knocker; I ſhall never ſtand the rencontre; ſo, like a wiſe general, I'll make a ſnug retreat.

Med. (*Turning round as he gets to the door*) Why, where are you going man?

Vand.

Vand. My dear friend, juſt recollected the moſt important-------

Med. Pſhaw! here's company.

Vand. 'Twon't detain me a ſingle------

Med. Why, they are here I tell you.

Vand. In for it, by all that's unlucky! Oh for the pillory or a horſepond! by way of an agreeable exchange.

Enter Miſs Vandercrab, *followed by* Miſs Harley, *and* Lord Melville.

(Vandercrab and Medley retire to the back of the Stage.)

Miſs Van. Ha! ha! ha! the moſt unaccountable adventure!

Lord Melv. And the moſt ridiculous creature, ha! ha! ha!

Miſs Van. Why, Sophia! I believe you never intend to laugh again.

Lord Mel. (approaching her) The ſerioufneſs that ſits upon the lips of Miſs Harley would almoſt wear the air of a reproof, were it not corrected by the indulgent ſoftneſs of her eyes. *(Makes love in dumb ſhew.)*

Med. (to Vand.) Do you know this coxcomb?

Vand. (*Aſide*) Too well to my ſorrow! However, I am glad you don't; yes, yes, I'll be off, and leave them to recognize each other at leiſure. (*As he again reaches the door Miſs* Vandercrab *ſees him*).

Miſs Van. Mr. Vandercrab! Mr. Vandercrab!

Vand. Plague o'your ſharp eyes and ſharper tongue!

Miſs Van. The moſt ridiculous ſcene has juſt happened!

Vand. The moſt ridiculous ſcene is juſt *going* to happen, you mean: *(Aſide)* 'Twill out, I ſee.

So

So when a man is to be compleatly ridiculous, why, the ſooner 'tis over the better! *(Croſſes the ſtage, and pulls* Melville *by the ſleeve)* Here's an old friend of mine, Charles.

Melv. [*Makes a negligent bow, and then turns again to Miſs* Harley.]

Med. Charles!

Vand. (Drily) He's vaſtly glad to ſee you!

Med. What do you mean?

Vand. Quite overjoyed!

Med. I don't underſtand you!

Vand. What! you don't know Charles, I ſuppoſe?

Med. You don't know Charles, you mean! Why, who the devil do you take *him* for?

Vand. Why, who the devil do you take him for, if you come to that! Did I not tell you he was altered?

Med. Altered indeed! *(Steps up to* Melville*)* Pray, young Gentleman, may I crave the favour of your name?

Melv. (Still talking to the Ladies) The prettieſt fan I think---French, I preſume?---My name, Sir! *(Careleſsly to Medley)*

Med. I ſuppoſe you have a name?

Melv. O yes, Sir; *(Aſide)* a couple at your ſervice!

" Gives coolneſs to the matchleſs dame;
" To every other breaſt, a flame!"
(Returns the fan.)

Pray, Sir, what may be your preſent occaſion with my name?

Med. Only, Sir, to have the pleaſure of inſerting it in an indictment at the Old Bailey!

Melv. Gad, and a very civil intention too! May I take the liberty of aſking, Sir, (craving, I mean)

mean) how I have deſerved ſo ſingular an honour at your hands?

Med. Come, come, young man, this is no time for trifling: when I tell you that I am the intimate and friend of Charles Vandercrab, I think whatever name you may next pleaſe to aſſume, you will hardly have effrontery enough to lay claim to that!

Melv. Say you ſo, old Teſty! Why faith then I'm of your opinion: and, to prove that my claims are of a very complaiſant nature, at leaſt, I will frankly own, that they increaſe or diminiſh with the credulity of the company. As the one, therefore, ſeems nearly exhauſted, I think I may as well put on the beſt grace I can, and civilly part with the other (*Bows*)

All. How! an impoſtor!

Miſs Har. Agitation and alarm overwhelm me! I muſt retire, or I ſhall faint. [*Exit.*

Vand. Tol de rol, lol. So then, Mr. Puppy, you turn out to be a ſad dog, and no ſon of mine at laſt! Well, that's a great comfort! Here, John, Thomas, Dick!---We'll have a jubil---but hold, hold, hold! Charles may have had his throat cut, by the bye; and that's no comfort at all! And, now I look again, the ſcoundrel has a deviliſh hardened air! Robbery and murder in every line of his face! Yes, yes, Charles is a gone man, and none of my daſtards will come to---

Med. Be patient, Mr. Vandercrab.

Vand. So I will, when that rogue's hanged! What, Thomas, Dick, John!---I ſay!---(*Rings again*)

Melv. Come, come, Mr. Vandercrab; the joke grows too ſerious. That I am not your ſon, I have confeſſed: let the frankneſs of that avowal be an argument for my ſincerity, when I aſſure

you, that his perſonal ſafety can only be endangered by your ill treatment of me!

Vand. How!

Melv. What further remains to be told, I muſt take time to conſider. In the interim, I am willing to make my apartment my priſon; nor will I attempt to eſcape, till your anxiety and my honour are fully ſatisfied. (*Bows, and exit.*)

Med. And, for the better ſecurity, I'll be your goaler. [*Exit.*

Vand. Here's a precious knave! Takes poſſeſſion of my houſe, bewitches all my ſervants, murders my ſon, for [aught I know, and then talks to me of his honour. Aye, aye! poor Charles: he's under ground, or in a mad-houſe; and I ſhall be fit for a mad-houſe too! After all my cares and anxiety about his education---to have my ſapling withered in its prime---my flower cut down in its bloom!

Miſs Van. What a buſtle is here about a little incident, which my common diſcernment informed me of long ago!

Vand. It did, did it? Why then, if your common diſcernment informed *you* of it, it would not have been amiſs if your common honeſty had informed me.

Miſs Van. Yes, yes; it requires no great ſkill, I think, to diſcover the object of this ſcheme.

Vand. What---a---robbery, I ſuppoſe?

Miſs Van. A robbery! yes, Sir; it would have been indeed a robbery; and of the richeſt jewel in your poſſeſſion! I think I need not be more explicit; you underſtand me! (*Walks about, fanning herſelf*)

Vand. Yes, yes! I underſtand you well enough ---My Lady Sparkle's diamonds, I ſuppoſe! Oh the ſcoundrel! I always thought the dog had too cunning a look to be one of my family---You've noticed his eyes, Letty?

Miſs

Miſs Van. With bluſhes I confeſs I have---a ſoft, deceitful ——

Vand. Hypocritical, knaviſh look!---Yes, yes, you have gueſſed the matter, Letty! But have you any proofs of his deſigns?

Miſs Van. Till this fortunate diſcovery, I own I was doubtful: but now! my memory ſupplies a thouſand!

Vand. A thouſand, does it?

Miſs Van. Spare me the touching repetition of them---and let it ſuffice that I am convinced!

Vand. Well, well; don't diſtreſs yourſelf: one repetition is as good as a hundred; and, if there are proofs---that's enough: So we'll bring the matter to a ſhort iſſue.

Miſs Van. Not too precipitate, Mr. Vandercrab! the delicacy and decorum of the female character!——

Vand. Delicacy and decorum! Pſhaw! you women never know how to manage theſe affairs rightly. You would ſtand dilly-dally, till the fellow was off, I ſuppoſe!

Miſs Van. Yet a little delay ——

Vand. Delay! Why, zounds I ſhou'd'nt wonder if he ſurprized you in your bed!

Miſs Van. Mr. Vandercrab, don't ſhock my ears!

Vand. No, no, no---to Bow-ſtreet we go; and the ſooner the better!

Miſs Van. Bow church, I ſuppoſe you mean, uncle!

Vand. And if we don't prepare a nooſe there for the dog within this week ——

Miſs Van. A week! Nay, poſitively, I proteſt againſt a week: it muſt be ten days at leaſt!

Vand. Well, well, a week or ten days---the ſooner the better!

Miſs Van. Since, then, you are ſo peremptory, however repugnant to my own ſentiments of propriety, I muſt comply---Yet, tell the amiable impoſtor——

Vand. Tell the amiable devil! What d'ye mean? 'Slife! I'm all impatience---I'll---

Miſs Van. Stay, Mr. Vandercrab! You'll be guilty of ſome horrible indecorum, I am ſure! Would it not be more delicate, think you, to let him explain the matter himſelf?

Vand. Explain the matter himſelf! Wh---What I ſuppoſe you think he'll turn king's evidence, and impeach his accomplices?

Miſs Van. His accomplices! Heaven and earth! is it poſſible, that, after all I have ſaid, you are not able to diſtinguiſh between a lover and a houſebreaker?

Vand. A lover!

Miſs Van. Yes, Sir; a lover! and ſince you oblige me to violate the natural delicacy of my ſex, I muſt tell you in plain terms, that I am the magnet of attraction.

Van. (*laughing*) You the magnet of attraction; hey!

Miſs Vand. And really, give me leave to hint to you, Mr. Vandercrab, that in quality of my uncle and protector, it would become you to be a little more ſerious on ſo important an occaſion.

Vand. True, Lettice, and as you were but two years and three quarters old when I was born, I think---

Miſs Van. Mr. Vandercrab, I have borne your inſults too long: to decide the matter at once, Sir, the air and manners of this young Unknown both proclaim him noble! and the more I reflect, the more am I convinced, that nothing but love could have reduced him to ſo paltry a diſguiſe!

Vand.

Vand. A paltry diſguiſe, hey?

Miſs Vand. And call it weakneſs, ſympathy, or what you pleaſe; I feel my heart reſpond with tendereſt pity.

Vand. Stark-ſtaring mad!---Blank verſe mad, by this light.

Miſs Vand. If for the mean conſideration of keeping my fortune in your family---

Vand. Odſo, her fortune! I did not think of that; truly there may be ſome ſenſe there. Why, really, Letty, after all, I am inclined to believe you are in the right.

Miſs Vand. Oh! you are---Are you, Sir?

Vand. Ten thouſand pounds! *(To himſelf, and looking full at her.)* Aye, and now I look again, I ſee ten thouſand charms in you I never thought of before.

Miſs Vand. Nay, now, uncle, you flatter---I am ſure you know me better than to ſuſpect me of a matrimonial inclination.

Vand. Suſpect! No, upon my ſoul; I have done ſuſpecting you a long time ago. And ſo you really think that you were the magnet of attraction, as you call it?

Miſs Vand. Poſitively.

Vand. And that this *young Unknown* is a prince in diſguiſe?

Miſs Vand. No, no; I did not abſolutely aſſert that he was a prince, neither.

Vand. Oh, not abſolutely a prince; only a pretender!

Miſs Vand. Only a man of faſhion I tell you.

Vand. Truly, as you obſerve, it was a confounded ſtrange paltry trick of a man of faſhion to pick the pocket of an honeſt citizen. And yet, now I think of it, it is not ſtrange at all; becauſe it's done every day. Well, I'll e'en go fathom the matter to the bottom; and, if it turns out

as you ſay---why, inſtead of hanging the dog, we'll marry him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Melville's *apartment.*

Melville, *ſolus.*

Memoirs of a noble peer juſt return'd from his travels; with his hair-breadth 'ſcapes, &c. &c. ha! ha! ha! Methinks I already ſee the advertiſement in capitals, for the amuſement of my footmen, and the emolument of ſome hackney ſcribbler. A rare frolick this, i'faith! However, I muſt e'en ſtem my difficulties till I hear the ſucceſs of Charles's plan---but how to convey a letter to him. *(Muſes.)*

Enter Vandercrab.

Vand. So; there ſtands my gentleman! He ſeems a little thoughtful or ſo. By this time, I ſuppoſe, he begins to have the fear of a halter before his eyes. I am ſtill ſomewhat ſlow of belief as to this love plot, I own. Yet, Letty was poſitive; and as it is poſſible he wants money, and certain that ſhe wants a huſband; *ergo*, he may have had ſagacity enough to think of providing for both.--- Sir, I---

Melv. What, my old Don, are you come to viſit your ſtate priſoner? why how dare you venture yourſelf *tête-a-tête* with ſuch a bloody-minded fellow as I am?

Vand. Why look ye, Sir! ſince we parted laſt I have had a ſmall ſecret whiſpered in my ear.

Mel. (Aſide) So Virtu has betrayed, I ſuppoſe?

Vand.

Vand. There has been a little ſort of a miſtake, I find.

Melv. *(Aſide.)* Even ſo----Nay, then the game's at an end.

Vand. In ſhort, I am told, that---I don't know how to believe it neither!---I am told that you are---'Slife, I ſhall make a ridiculous figure here at laſt. *(Aſide.)*

Melv. Come, Mr. Vandercrab; to put an end to your embarraſſment, in one word, you *may* believe it.

Vand. I may---may I?

Melv. You may.

Vand. And then you are really and truly---

Melv. Really and truly.

Vand. In love.

Melv. In what, Sir? *(Aſide)* Where the deuce is he rambling now? With Miſs Harley, I ſuppoſe. Not amiſs that idea, and ſomewhat nearer truth than I could have wiſh'd.

Vand. Come, come, you may as well be frank at once; ſhe has told me all.

Melv. (*with ſurpriſe.*) Indeed!

Vand. You have made your ground ſure, I find.

Melv. (*Aſide.*) Have I ſo? thanks for the information.

Vand. So, if you can prove yourſelf not to be a ſcoundrel, and as ſhe has a pretty fortune---

Melv. Pſha!----hang her fortune! Money, Mr. Vandercrab, is no object to me.

Vand. Oh dear, Sir, none at all, I dare ſwear. Money! Mere vulgar droſs; no object at all to a gentleman of your appearance. Not abſolutely a Prince, as Letty ſays, but a Duke or a Lord in diſguiſe, at leaſt.

Melv. My pretenſions do not fly quite ſo high as the former, Mr. Vandercrab.

Vand.

Vand. No! Why, now you're too modeſt! Yes, you are, upon my ſoul. Be a Duke at once. Never ſpoil a good ſtory in the telling, man; and one's full as probable as t'other, you know. Nay, it was really very condeſcending in a perſon of your Grace's dignity, to make my humble roof your own; eſpecially when you muſt have ſo many fine eſtates, and caſtles---*in the air.*

Melv. What I am, Sir, a little time will explain. Fortune, I repeat, is no object to me. The youth and beauty of the lady are of ſo extraordinary a kind---

Vand. Why, yes, as you obſerve, they are of a very extraordinary kind, indeed.

Melv. As would fully juſtify me in my own eyes, whatever the world may ſay of the match.

Vand. The World ſay! here's a pompous fellow! Why an Emperor's a chimney ſweeper to him! Well, Sir, nothing now remains but to know where Charles is, and what your name may be?

Melv. Both of which I have told you are ſecrets.

Vand. Secrets! 'Sdeath, Sir, do you intend to be married without a name?

Melv. 'Sdeath, Sir, I don't know whether I intend to be married at all.

Vand. I can hold no longer---Look'ye, Sir, without further ceremony, you are (Melville *advances angrily.*) 'Gad, I like your looks ſo little ---that---I won't tell you what you are. [*Exit.*

Melv. (laughing.) So, between hanging and marrying, I am in a pretty critical ſituation here! Miſs Harley avow a paſſion for me! Impoſſible. I ſcarce dare hope it. Cold and inexorable, when ſhe ſuppoſed me the ſon of Mr. Vandercrab---but, hold,---It muſt be ſo---ſhe has diſcovered my

my real name and ſituation, and with the ambition incident to her---(*Noiſe at the door.*) Pſha! Vandercrab again!---So, ſo; the lady herſelf---the plot thickens---Miſs Harley!

Miſs Harley *entering, alarmed, and fearful.*

Miſs Har. Oh, Charles! for to me you ſtill bear that name---how am I to excuſe an intruſion upon you ſo ſingular?

Melv. Can my Sophia ever term her preſence an intruſion? It is joy, pleaſure, liberty to me; and if the delicacy of her own heart demands an excuſe, let her allow mine to ſupply the tendereſt——

Miſs Har. It is an obſervation your delicacy might have ſpared me, Sir; but the moments are precious. I came to offer you an opportunity for eſcape, which may not eaſily occur again.

Melv. This generoſity, Madam!

Miſs Har. Charles, Charles, it is my turn to be generous now. You honoured me with your attentions at a time when duty to my benefactor and friend obliged me to ſhun you; that tie withdrawn, I think I owe you an act of gratitude, which, however ſingular your preſent ſituation, I dare hope you will never reduce me to bluſh for.

Melv. Thus on my knees---

Miſs Har. Riſe, Sir, your eſcape muſt be immediate.

Melv. Make it then bleſt by accompanying me.

Miſs Har. Accompanying you! Heavens! can you inſult me with the idea?

Melv. And why not, my love? Flattered as I am with the tender intereſt you have already taken in my fate——

Miſs Har. I thank you for the reproach, Sir, and feel all the humiliation conveyed in it. *(Going.)*

Melv. Allow me to explain.

Miſs Har. Never. The heart that could ſo groſsly miſconſtrue mine, deſerves to loſe it. Apologies would be fruitleſs, and I can now, indeed, think you the contemptible adventurer you appear.

Melv. Adventurer, Madam! Hear, and believe me when I aſſert, that if the perſon of Lord Melville were known to you, my claim to that title would need no appeal but to your eye.

Miſs Har. For ſhame, for ſhame, Sir! to ſpare you the meanneſs of further duplicity, know that I am too well acquainted with Lady Charlotte Courtly, to be ſo eaſily deceived, with reſpect either to the ſentiments or conduct of the nobleman you mention, and under her friendly roof I will now ſeek a repoſe, this I fear can never more afford me.

Melv. Yet hear me, Sophia; you weep!

Miſs Har. I do not bluſh for my tears, Sir; they ſtamp indignity only on him who cauſed them; and ſurely the ſharpeſt pang a generous mind can ſuffer, is on proving the object moſt dear to it, unworthy the diſtinction. [*Exit.*

Melv. One moment only? The ſuppoſed Lord Melville is Charles---She's gone! and with an indignation ſo lively as to prove itſelf ſincere. Her inſulted delicacy demands a reparation; and, ſpite of pride and prejudice, it muſt be made.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in Sir John's *Houſe.*

Miſs Harley *diſcovered walking about, followed by* Kitty.

Kitty.

WELL, dear Madam, what ſignifies walking yourſelf to death about the room? you may as well ſit down: as to Lady Charlotte's being abroad, why, I ſuppoſe there's nothing very extraordinary in that; and for my part, I think you were very lucky in eſcaping ſo well from Old Cruſty.

Miſs Har. You muſt not ſpeak diſreſpectfully of Mr. Vandercrab, Kitty; had all under his roof poſſeſſed the ſame virtues with himſelf, I had never quitted it. (*Sighs*).

Kitty. A fig for his virtues, Ma'am! I am ſure he could never endure to ſee us ſervants dreſſed in a chriſtian-like manner. However, Ma'am, when you are miſtreſs of this fine houſe---

Miſs Har. Me! miſtreſs of this houſe, Kitty! you dream.

Kitty. (*Aſide.*) Deuce take my tongue, it's always running before my wit; I hope ſhe won't diſcover that it is Sir John Lovelace's, till I am gone: (*to her*) I mean, ma'am, when you live with Lady Charlotte in this houſe.

Miſs

Miſs Har. To be ſo inhoſpitably received; ſo coldly welcomed!

Kitty. Why to be ſure her ladyſhip might as well have ordered us a little bit of a regale, or ſo, juſt to paſs away the time; ſuppoſe, ma'am, you were to amuſe yourſelf with that little ſong you were trying laſt night?

Miſs Har. I have no ſoul for harmony at preſent, Kitty.

Kitty. Ah! ma'am, if you had but ſeen how Mr. Charles look'd at you, while you were ſinging it—I am ſure I ſhall never forget his eyes.

Miſs Har. Pſha! nonſenſe! however, I would not willingly prolong one tedious hour.———

(Miſs Harley ſings.)

SONG.

From the light Down that mocks the Gale,
The Linnet culls her Stores;
From each wild Flow'r that ſcents the Vale
The Bee a Balm explores:

With Nature's trueſt Senſe endued,
Unconſcious of Alloy,
In ev'ry Gift they find a Good,
And ev'ry Good enjoy.

Feeling's vain Child, alone, aſſigned
A doubtful, wav'ring Pow'r,
With Sighs can chill the Summer Wind,
With Tears can blight the Flow'r.

Its only dangerous Gift, ah! why
Did Heav'n to Man impart;
And bid each treacherous Senſe ſupply
A Venom for his Heart!

Kitty.

Kitty. A charming ſong, Madam!

Miſs Har. And a ſpiritleſs ſinger. But time flies; Mr. Vandercrab will ſoon receive the letter I left behind me, and a long abſence may induce him to ſuſpect you: return therefore immediately, and ---- *(feels for her purſe).*

Kitty. *(Aſide)* Yes, to tell my maſter, that you are run away with the old beau here! dear heart, it almoſt goes againſt my conſcience; and yet, as Sir John ſays, 'tis but a little harmleſs tricking for her good after all.

Miſs Har. Accept this trifle, dear Kitty, in teſtimony of my gratitude for the paſt; and be aſſured, that whatever is my future fate, I ſhall endeavour to reward your ſervices as they deſerve.

Kitty. *(Aſide)* Reward my ſervices as they deſerve! now, like many greater folks, can't I tell whether that promiſe means a place or a pillory?

[*Exit* Kitty.

Miſs Har. *(Alone)* Why I ſhould wiſh the company of a girl like that, I know not; yet either my fancy throws its own colouring over every object, or the very apartments are ſtrange, cold, and comfortleſs: this I think I was never in before; and the adjoining one ſeems a ſtudy. I will try if the thoughts of others are more amuſing than my own. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir John, *watching* Miſs Harley.

Sir John. So! thus far my plan is ſucceſsful. My houſe, inſtead of my niece's, is become the aſylum of the fair fugitive; and now, Cupid and Venus befriend me! but ſhe's here!

[*Retires.*

Miſs

Miſs Harley, *re-entering (in great agitation).*

Miſs Har. Heavens! what will become of me! the apartment within cannot be Lady Charlotte's, and my heart beats with the wildeſt apprehenſions. At any rate, I will immediately fly to--*(going, ſees* Sir John, *who comes forward and kneels)* Ah!

Sir John. My arms! my angel! And in them find every welcome, love and fortune can afford.

Miſs Har. This language, Sir John, is an equal degradation to both of us; I came here under promiſe of protection——

Sir John. Which you ſhall find in its ampleſt extent; tho' not exactly from the perſon expected. In a word, my ſweet Sophia, this is my houſe, not Lady Charlotte's; and the little artifice by which you have been miſled——

Miſs Har. Miſled, Sir John! betrayed! trepanned! infamouſly and meanly trepanned! I have neither ſpirits, or words to expreſs half the indignation I feel.

Sir John. Charming girl! how irreſiſtible are thoſe tears! Let me——

Miſs Har. Be ſilent, Sir. You have perhaps diſgraced, certainly ſhocked, but to tempt me, is beyond your power! my former diſguſt is now only heightened; and when to the abſurdities of your character, you thus oblige me to annex its vices, I ſcarce know whether my contempt, or my averſion are moſt predominant.

Sir John. (Aſide) Here are heroics for you! This is the *gentle* Miſs Harley too! Zounds! I never knew the gentleſt of the ſex, but touch her on a favourite topic, and ſhe could rant like a tragedy queen.

Miſs Har. For an inſult ſo baſe, one only poſſible reparation now remains, Sir John; let me inſtantly return and----

Sir John.

Sir John. Return!---Come, come, Miſs Harley; if love has no influence, at leaſt liſten to prudence. You are in my houſe; the family you have quitted know your flight to be voluntary; and are, ere this, informed of your retreat. Abandoned, therefore, by them, where can you find ſo ſafe a ſhelter as in the boſom of---

Miſs Har. A wretch! who has meanly plotted to deprive me of every other. Oh, Charles! Charles! was it for this then that I fled from thee? (*throws herſelf into a chair, and burſts into tears.*)

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, Mr. Varniſh is below with a Venus.

Sir John. Well, blockhead! and I'm above with a Venus; bid him call another time, I'm engaged.

Serv. He deſired me to inform you, Sir---

Sir John. Bid him call another time, I ſay.

Serv. That his Grace has offered twenty guineas more.

Sir John. O'ons, ſirrah! bid him call---an---hey!---what! twenty guineas more do you ſay?

Serv. And that the bargain is to be ſtruck within this hour.

Sir John. Struck within this hour is it? Muſt ſee Varniſh! Yes, yes, muſt ſee Varniſh; and now for my dernier reſource with the Lady---vaniſh, raſcal. [*Exit* Servant.

To convince you of my honour, Miſs Harley, this paper contains a ſettlement, (*takes one from his pocket*) which only wants my ſignature to be legal. Deign to peruſe it; a few moments conſi-

conſideration may do wonders in my favour; and for that time, *ma belle amie*, I kiſs your hands.

[*Lays the paper on the table, and exit.*

Miſs Har. (*riſing*) He has plotted but too ſucceſsfully: whichever way I turn, ruin and infamy purſue me. And Charles! what can he think, but that, dazzled with ſplendor, I meanly ſold myſelf to a wretch, devoid of every other recommendation! But is there no bell! no——

Cha. (*Singing without*) Tol de rol, loll.

Miſs Har. Some one is on the ſtairs; and if my ear did not deceive me, the key, though turned, ſtill remains in the lock?

Cha. (*Trying the door and knocking*) Sir John, Sir John!

Miſs Har. (*Faintly*) Come in.

Cha. What, like a ſprite through the key-hole? The door's faſt, man!---Hey-day! locked on the outſide! (*Entering.*) Pray what ſort of a frol---hey!---a woman---young and pretty!---modeſt too, one ſhou'd ſwear by her appearance, if her ſituation were equivocal.

Miſs Har. How oddly he looks at me! What ſhall I ſay to him? you wiſhed to ſee Sir John Lovelace, I believe, Sir? (*Curtſying*)

Cha. (*Bowing*) I believe I did, Madam! But really my eyes are ſo much better engaged at preſent—that---upon my word---I don't know any body I ſhould leſs wiſh to ſee.

Miſs Har. Your appearance, Sir, beſpeaks the gentleman.

Cha. (*Bowing*) Oh, dear, Madam!

Miſs Har. Might I venture to requeſt---

Cha. (*Advancing*) Requeſt! my dear creature! Lips like thoſe were formed to command.

Miſs Har.

Miſs Har. (Retreating) Sir!

Cha. Nay, don't be alarmed! By this fair hand, I would not wiſh to ſtir up the gall of the old Baronet: though, when next he locks the door upon a pretty girl, I recommend him to let it be on the *inſide* at leaſt. But proceed: thoſe ſoft eyes are full of ſomewhat, which I am impatient to ——

Miſs Har. They are full of tears, Sir---the painful language of my heart; your looks ſpeak a ſuſpicion, which, though I bluſh to incur, I have not leiſure to obviate---I have been tricked into this houſe.

Cha. How! tricked!---Can this be true?

Miſs Har. Heavens! can you doubt it? The bitterneſs of the avowal ſurely ſtamps a conviction of its ſincerity upon my features.

Cha. (Aſide) Faith I begin to think ſhe is in earneſt! I muſt know more of this.---Who are you, Madam?

Miſs Har. A future time, Sir, may explain both my ſituation and connections.---My name is Harley.

Cha. Harley! Not *Sophia* Harley?

Miſs Har. The ſame, Sir; the ward of Mr. Vandercrab.

Cha. Of Mr. Vandercrab! Impoſſible. *(Aſide)* My father's ward in the houſe of Sir John Lovelace.---Surely Melville---

Miſs Har. (Aſide) His father, and Melville, did he ſay?

Cha. (Still half aſide) But this is no time for explanation. Inform me, Madam, where I can place you with ſafety for the preſent; and, be aſſured, I take an intereſt in your welfare, that will induce me amply to retaliate your wrongs.

Miſs Har. It was my intention to have claimed the protection of Lady Charlotte Courtly.

Cha. More wonders!---But proceed.

Miſs. Har. The darkneſs of the night, and the ſimilitude of two houſes in the ſame ſquare, made it eaſy for a treacherous ſervant to miſlead me: place me but once under Lady Charlotte's roof, and---O heavens!---Sir John!

Sir John *enters.*

Cha. Honour me with your hand, Miſs Harley; my ſervants, who are in waiting, will attend you ſafely to Lady Charlotte's.

Sir John. Lord Melville, give me leave to---

Cha. In a few moments, Sir, I am your's. Nay, ſhrink not, Madam: Sir John Lovelace knows me; and will have no difficulty in believing, that I dare be as brave in the defence of innocence, as he can be in the vindication of guilt.

[*Exit, leading* Miſs Harley.

Sir John. (Alone) So! a confounded fooliſh buſineſs I have made of this! plague of that fellow below, and his picture: I might have known that a Venus upon canvas would not run away! but he muſt be ingenious that can keep a living one, though under lock and key! I had forgot, too, that this puppy of a Lord ran tame about my houſe. Be conſoled, however, Sir John; thine is no uncommon caſe; for, when an old fellow enters the liſts with a young one for a pretty girl, the odds are ten to one, that he looks no wiſer in the end than I do! [*Exit.*

SCENE,

SCENE, Mr. Vandercrab's *Houſe.*

Miſs Vandercrab, *followed by* Kitty.

Miſs Van. And you are ſure, Kitty, that ſhe is gone to Sir John's?

Kitty. Poſitive, Madam. I may ſafely affirm, that I know a perſon who ſaw her there.

Miſs Van. Yes, yes, I always ſuſpected what her ſilence and her demureneſs would end in! there is ſure to be ſome miſchief on foot, Kitty, when a young flirt holds her tongue.

Kitty. (Aſide) Aye, or when an old one talks.

Miſs Van. I am glad my ſagacity was not deceived, however; very glad I was not miſtaken in her---My uncle not yet returned, do you ſay?

Kitty. No, Madam; but my maſter and the Dutch Gentleman are expected in every moment.

Miſs Van. Expected! O' my conſcience I believe the bulls and bears in the Alley have devoured them both: however, you'll take care to deliver this to him, Kitty. *(giving a letter)* I have given him a hint of Miſs Sophia's retreat: he may take his own meaſures: for my part, I am convinced that it will be a charitable deed to reſcue the poor thing from further deſtruction; therefore I'll go immediately to Sir John Lovelace's,---that I may be the firſt to expoſe her.

[*Exit.*

Kitty. (*Alone*) Get thee gone, envy and vexation of ſpirit! Well, it muſt be owned, that Sir John underſtands laying a plot; ſince there is not ſo effectual a method of publiſhing a piece of ſcandal, as that of telling it for a ſecret---Hey day! here comes my maſter through the compting-houſe; and with the letter in his hand Miſs

Harley left behind. I'll e'en keep out of the way; for, if he does but ſuſpect me of knowing any thing, 'tis ten to one but he'll diſcover all.

[*Exit* Kitty.

Enter Vandercrab, *through a folding door, with a letter open in his hand, and followed by* Medley.

Med. But this elopement is the moſt ſurpriſing thing, Mr. Vandercrab——

Vand. Pſha! not at all ſurpriſing, not at all ſurpriſing, I tell you: 'tis natural---'tis in character. We're all a ſet of fools together. Here, I'm a fool, becauſe I did not know a rogue from my own ſon! and you're not much wiſer, though you did: and Letty, ſhe's a fool in one way; and Miſs---ſhe's determined to have her ſhare of folly in another!

Med. But a young woman's reputation, Mr. Vandercrab, is ſo important a charge——

Vand. That ſhe always rids her friends of it as ſoon as ſhe can: What now, I ſuppoſe you'd flame and rave, and fret yourſelf ſick, to ſee your family at ſixes and ſevens, like mine?

Med. I confeſs I ſhould feel rather---

Vand. (With ſuppreſſed vexation) Aye, aye, I know you would; but you ſee how I bear it! Now, you'd be for hanging the ſcoundrel above ſtairs firſt, and yourſelf after! But I'm a man of the world, Mr. Medley, and theſe things never derange me. Nay, I ſhould not be in the leaſt ſurpriſed to ſee that very rogue, now ſafely under lock and key, walking about my houſe, with the eaſe and the impudence of a---*(Turns ſhort on Melville, who enters)* Death and the devil, Sir! how did you get here?

Melv.

Melv. By the grand maſter key, Mr. Vandercrab---a golden one---don't be alarmed however, depend upon my parole.

Vand. I'd rather you depended upon a halter.

Med. All in character, my good friend you know; Miſs Harley having made one elopement, this young gentleman, I ſuppoſe, meant to oblige us with another----

Melv. Miſs Harley eloped? impoſſible!

Vand. As impoſſible as 'tis, it's true, Sir; ſhe has *withdrawn* herſelf, to uſe her own mincing phraſe, and you may ſee it under her own mincing hand too *(throwing the letter)*.

Enter Kitty, *and delivers a letter to* Vandercrab.

Kitty. Sir, my lady deſired me to give you this.

Vand. Why, what's ſhe eloped too?

Med. For aught I ſee, my good friend, you and I are the only part of your houſehold who are likely to prove fixtures.

Vand. Fixtures! 'Slife, if this humour of migrating holds, I ſhall expect to ſee the houſe itſelf travelling, like the chapel of Loretto, thro' the air; but come, let me ſee *(Reads)* "Dear uncle, "I think it neceſſary to inform you, that the fair "diſgracer of your family will be found at Sir "John Lovelace's."

Melv. At Sir John Lovelace's!

Vand. (Still reading) Um!--um!--um! "flight "ought not to ſurpriſe you"---um!----"little "hint from your's in haſte,

"LETITIA VANDERCRAB."

(folding the letter) Yes, Sir, Sir John Lovelace's.

Melv. 'Sdeath, Sir! this is a plot either upon the honor or reputation of Miſs Harley.

Vand.

Vand. 'Slife, Sir, now I'm of opinion, it's a plot upon both, and of her own invention too.

Melv. If ſhe is indeed at Sir John's, ſome treachery has drawn her there; ſhe meant to have accepted the protection of Lady Charlotte Courtly. This I had from her own lips, and therefore cannot be deceived.

Vand. Hum! Now that's the very reaſon why I think you may.

Melv. Her fame, her honor, even, demand your immediate interference. And in a word, Sir, if you do not fly to protect her---I will.

Vand. Well ſaid, Mr. Bounce! Od, I like your looks better than I did tho': and if this is really the caſe, why I don't care if I fly along with you.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *an apartment in* Lady Charlotte's *houſe. A table with muſick ſcattered over it, &c.*

Miſs Harley *and* Lady Charlotte *enter.*

Lady Char. Oh! the unreaſonable old mortal! I poſitively diſclaim him for an uncle! Why did you not dart one angry glance, Sophia, and fix him amidſt his own petrifactions?

Miſs Har. Where a petrifaction is begun at the heart, neither words or looks avail much; but enough upon the odious ſubject! from what I have recounted, you are then really of opinion, that the ſuppoſed Lord Melville is no other than Charles Vandercrab, and that this has been a double transformation?

Lady Char. Convinced of it! the idea is confirmed by a thouſand ſuſpicious circumſtances, that were wholly unaccountable before.

Miſs Har. And you are not ſeriouſly offended at the diſcovery?

Lady

Lady Char. *Seriouſly*! mortally child! only I don't intend to adopt the female method of revenge, and puniſh myſelf; why, my dear ſentimental girl, what wou'd'ſt thou have me do, on the *diſcovery*---as you term it?

Miſs Har. Even exactly what you intend; follow your own inclinations. Raillery apart, however, I am not clear, whether the woman who plots upon a man's heart without any intention of parting with her own, does not juſtify a little retaliation.

Lady Char. And to ſay truth, Charles has never made a ſingle profeſſion to me under his borrowed name---tho' he perſecuted me in his real one: are you ſatisfied? If not, I proteſt to you, I cannot command another ſober idea.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Lord Melville, madam.

Lady Char. Oh the dear creature! how kind of him to come at the very moment---

Miſs Har. How!

Lady Char. When pride and reſentment will render me ſo delightfully perverſe!

Miſs Har. My life for it, he is come to tell----

Lady Char. What I'm reſolved not to hear; retire then, my dear Sophia, for a few moments; it is now my turn to fineſſe; and if I don't revenge my own cauſe, never truſt a woman's wit again. *(Exit Miſs Harley)* Yes, yes; here he comes, with ſentiment and explanation in every line of his face: now for a ſaucy air, and that eſſence of coquetry, a ſong. *(Snatches her guitar off the table and ſtrikes the chords).*

Charles,

Charles, *entering*.

" *The trembling ſtrings to touch her fingers croud,*
" *And tell their joy for ev'ry kiſs aloud;*
" *Small art there needs to make them tremble ſo,*
" *Touch'd by* her *hand---who would not tremble*
" *too?*"

Lady Cha. Moſt apropos! O what a delightful age was that, when love was the univerſal theme; when wits, poets, and even ſtateſmen, thought no other worthy their pens; and the diſpoſition of a patch, or the colour of a knot, gave birth to more ſonnets than the whole ſchool of Parnaſſus affords us in a century now! It was the golden age for women.

Cha. Rather the iron one, madam; when gallantry was the tame ſubſtitute for paſſion; and conceits were multiplied like Egyptian emblems, till the goddeſs was forgotten in the whimſical decorations of her ſhrine.

Lady Char. And yet, do you know, you would have been little better than a Goth, had you lived in thoſe days? I declare, I do not believe you have ſaid a civil thing to me this four and twenty hours.

Cha. (*Aſide*) How ſhall I begin? Every moment while it increaſes the *neceſſity* of explaining myſelf, leſſens the power---Yet thoſe encouraging ſmiles.

Lady Char. Well! heavens! how ſtupid you are! Do not you ſee! I am waiting to be flattered?

Cha. Flattered!---firſt tell me how?

Lady Char. Umph! let me ſee!---Why no---It ſhall not be upon my perſon neither---No---poſitively not upon my perſon; I think that tolerable enough myſelf---What, you don't? (*He looks paſſionately*

paſſionately at her) No, I ſee by your manner you do not.---Well, let that paſs then. It ſhall be upon my prudence, my diſcretion, my *humility*, if you pleaſe; and all thoſe ſober virtues, which your ſober face is juſt now preparing a panegyric upon.

Cha. Your virtues and your faults have equal charms for me.

Lady Char. Bravo!

Cha. Your perſon is enchanting; your manner irreſiſtible.

Lady Char. Braviſſimo!

Cha. But---Oh! Lady Charlotte!

Lady Char. Heavens! did ever orator make ſo flat a concluſion? Why, my Lord, has your inſpiration totally failed you of a ſudden?

Cha. On the contrary, it becomes but too powerful. Silence, is the trueſt proof of Love.

Lady Char. Is it? Why then never woman was in love yet, I am ſure.

Cha. In ſhort, Madam, I came to communicate a ſecret ſo important——

Lady Char. A ſecret! better and better. Come, come, communicate it then directly---but may I whiſper it to all my acquaintance?

Cha. Once imparted to you, it will no longer remain a ſecret to any one.

Lady Char. No; that I will engage.

Cha. On my knees then---

Lady Char. Oh! it muſt be told on your knees, muſt it? Nay then, I would not give a *bouquet* for it. For I have had ſo many important ſecrets told me by gentlemen upon their knees; and all of them ſo lamentably alike---

Cha. Lady Charlotte, this cutting levity at a time when my heart——

Lady Char. Come, come, my Lord; you muſt poſitively part with that frown. It has too much of the Engliſhman in it---It has, upon my

word. Engliſhman! nay I proteſt you are grown as gloomy as a Dutch Burgomaſter.

Cha. Madam!

Lady Char. And that tone too! So barbarouſly impaſſioned!---Take care, my Lord, take care! You are returning to Charles again.

Cha. I am returned to Charles again, Madam, the humble Charles---But it is perfectly right---It is extremely well---I have had the pleaſure of proving myſelf a moſt egregious coxcomb——

Lady Char. Ha! ha! ha!

Cha. Enjoy your triumph, Madam; but if you are only vain of wounding *hearts*, it will rarely be repeated; ſince the fops by whom you are generally ſurrounded have none to loſe.

Lady Char. Really then, I think a *chapeau* a mighty pretty ſubſtitute; and if yours, my Lord, occupied its place under your arm, inſtead of ſawing the air like a truncheon——

Cha. Nothing now remains, Madam, but to bid you an everlaſting adieu.

Lady Char. (Aſide) That muſt not be either---Now for a little female artifice to recall him.

Cha. And ſhould you (which however I am not vain enough to hope) ever again diſplay thoſe graces I once found ſo formidable; ever attempt to allure me, by thoſe ſmiles---

Lady Char. (Pulling her glove) This teazing!

Cha. Yet you ſhould find my reſolutions ſo unalterable---

Lady Char. Do pray, my Lord, pull off my glove for me. *(He heſitates. At laſt pulls it off, falls on his knees, and kiſſes her hand in a tranſport)* Ha! ha! ha! ha! So much for your *unalterable* reſolutions!

Cha. Exquiſite trifler!---you were born to break them. But tell me, can the moſt earneſt ſolici-

cation, the tendereſt entreaty prevail upon you to be ſerious?

Lady Cha. Hum!---Tendereſt! and earneſt! why, yes, I think I *can* be ſerious---nay, I am convinced I can; provided you are not unreaſonable in your time.

Cha. A very little will ſuffice to give you the hiſtory of my heart; the impreſſion you made on it at Paris, I think not I need now repeat.

Lady Char. Really, my Lord, I think not either; ſince if five hundred repetitions are not enough---

Cha. I ſaw you ſurrounded with Loves and Graces.

Lady Char. French ones, then, I ſwear; for I was in a circle of powdered *petits maîtres*, and rouged coquettes.

Cha. Is this your promiſe, Lady Charlotte?

Lady Char. Why lud, what would you have now?

Cha. By heaven, Madam, you have not been ſerious for a moment!

Lady Char. Well, and did not I tell you not to be unreaſonable in your time?---and apropos---of time--- I have ſuch a head!

Cha. Going, Madam?

Lady Char. Thirteen engagements deep, my Lord! I ſhall be ruined if I loſe a moment; and as to the ſecret, why you may perhaps tell it, if we meet in the courſe of the evening---or if not---to-morrow---or next day---or next ſummer--or if it's never told---why, I ſuppoſe it's of no great conſequence.

Cha. Perverſe and ungrateful! to you it plainly is of none; to Sir John Lovelace, however--- *(walks backwards and forwards)* I once thought Lady Charlotte---but---it is paſt! and by immediately withdrawing, I will ſpare you a further

conviction of my weakneſs, and myſelf the pain of ſeeing the woman I moſt love, as incapable of a generous, as of a tender ſentiment. [*Exit.*

Lady Char. (*to Miſs* Harley, *who enters.*) Ha! ha! ha! poor Charles; now have I ſo unreaſonable a ſtock of good nature, that though he has plotted moſt ſucceſsfully upon my vanity, I have not the heart to puniſh his further.

Miſs Har. What now then are your plans?

Lady Char. A quarter of an hour hence we will drop in at Sir John Lovelace's; nay, be not alarmed; with me you are ſafe, you know; there will be nothing ſingular in the ſtep, as my uncle expects me to look at a picture he has lately added to his collection; and if the eclairciſſement takes place there, (as I dare ſay it will) I will ſo amply revenge myſelf on Charles---

Miſs Har. What, by *refuſing* him at laſt?

Lady Char. Oh, lud, no: worſe, my dear--- by accepting him--- Come into my dreſſing-room, and we'll talk further. [*Exeunt.*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Sir John Lovelace's *Houſe.*

Miſs Vandercrab *enters, followed by a ſervant.*

Miſs Vandercrab.

SIR John not at home?

Serv. No, Madam; my maſter has been out this half hour.

Miſs Vand. What, and a Lady with him?

Serv. No, Ma'am.

Miſs Vand. Nor any one left behind?

Serv. Not a creature but ſervants, Ma'am.

Miſs Vand. The confidence of this coxcomb's denial had almoſt perſuaded me I ſhould meet them at the firſt ſtep; but I gueſs how it is. Sir John is gone out to ſave appearances, and Miſs, in the interim, is ſhut up in ſome retired apartment; is not that the caſe, Sir?

Serv. Madam!

Miſs Vand. Come, come, young man, you think it's jealouſy that brings me here;---nay, no denials: I ſee by your embarraſſment that you do; but you are deceived; you are, upon my word; Sir John and I are not upon thoſe terms.

Serv. (*Aſide*) No, really; nor on any terms, if I may judge from your appearance.

Miſs Van. What, is there no convenient cloſet? No retired apartment where a fair lady may lie hid for half an hour?

Serv. (*half aſide*) The deuce is in this woman; ſhe knows our houſe as well as if it was her own.

Miſs

Miſs Van. Confeſs, however, the whole truth, and I promiſe to reward you liberally. (*Takes out her purſe*)

Serv. (*heſitating*) Nay, if I muſt ſpeak, madam, the whole truth is---(*Aſide.*) Now can't I for my ſoul invent a lie: the whole truth is---

Miſs Van. (*impatiently, and giving him money.*) Well.

Serv. That I really know nothing at all of the matter.

Miſs Van. (*puſhing him aſide*) Impertinent coxcomb! However, if you don't, I will, though I ſearch the houſe. (*Offers to croſs*)

Serv. (*Interpoſing*) Not ſo faſt, if you pleaſe, Ma'am; this is my maſter's muſeum; his cabinet of curioſities; he never ſuffers any body to---

Miſs Van. Is it ſo, Sir? Then for that reaſon I am determined to examine it; and if I am not deceived, I ſhall find one curioſity there more than uſual. [*Exit at door.*

Serv. I am ſure you will *carry* one there; Why, what's the woman mad? I'll e'en follow, or, for aught I know, ſhe may whip a putrefaction or an Emperor into her pocket. No, no; here ſhe comes again, on full ſail.

Re-enter Miſs Vandercrab.

Miſs Van. Not there, that's certain. Surely Kitty muſt have been miſtaken. I begin not to like this affair at all. Luckily, however, the man does not know me. And if I can eſcape without being---

Vand. (*without*) Bid the coachman turn and wait.

Sir John. (*Without*) Walk up, Gentlemen, if you pleaſe.

Miſs Van. Undone, undone! my uncle's voice and Sir John's!

Serv. Now, Madam, you may enquire of my maſter himſelf, if you pleaſe.

Miſs

Miſs Van. To be found here, without having made the diſcovery !---and, if ſhe ſhould turn out innocent at laſt, it would be the moſt unlucky thing! However, Mr. Vandercrab can't ſtay long: I'll e'en ſtep into the muſeum, and truſt to my own invention, and Sir John's politeneſs, for an excuſe.

Serv. (Stopping her) That may be, Madam; but unfortunately I have no invention, and my maſter ſtill leſs politeneſs, where my bones are in queſtion: therefore, two words to that, if you pleaſe.

Miſs Van. (Giving money) Let this ſatisfy your ſcruples: and now---not a ſyllable to your maſter ---till his viſitor is gone *(Goes in)*.

Serv. (Shutting her in) Safe, Madam, ſafe: Two words, did I ſay? *(looking at the money)* Aye, and two very eloquent ones:---a few of theſe well applied have confined many a noiſy ſpeaker to leſs than two words. [*Exit.*

Enter Vandercrab *and* Melville, *followed by* Sir John.

Sir John. Really, Gentlemen, as I before obſerved, this requeſt is a little extraordinary; and ſince, without vanity, I may ſometimes boaſt the favours of the fair, there are occaſions when it would wound my feelings in the tendereſt manner. In ſhort——

Vand. Zounds! if he comes to his *in ſhorts*, he'll talk to eternity! *(Aſide)* Why, look ye, Sir John, if we are in the wrong, (as, it being a woman in queſtion, we very poſſibly may) you will find us ready to make you all due conceſſions; but the truth is, we have every reaſon to ſuppoſe, that Miſs Harley is now in this houſe.

Melv. And, if here, probably inveigled by ſome artifice as fruitleſs as it was ungenerous.

Sir John. (Aſide) Pretty well informed, this young

young Gentleman! So much, Mr. Vandercrab, for ſuppoſitions. Now if it ſhould be proved, that Miſs Harley has choſen the protection of my ward, Lord Melville——

Melv. (*Haſtily*) Sir, I have not ſeen her theſe four hours.

Sir John. (*With ſurpriſe*) Why, pray Sir, who ſpoke of you?

Melv. (*To himſelf*) I am wrong; but, at any rate, ſhe cannot be with Charles!

Sir John. Quite *en cavalier* this mode of proceeding, Gentlemen. Satisfy yourſelves, however, I beg. My houſe is always open for the reception of my friends; and, ſhould any apartment in it excite your curioſity more than the reſt, it is extremely at your ſervice!

Vand. (*To himſelf*) What the plague is Medley puzzling about, I wonder? we're all in the wrong here again!

Sir John. That door, Gentlemen, opens upon a little muſeum of mine---a ſmall collection not unworthy your notice:---a few coins, an Egyptian mummy, and a moſt extraordinary piece of ruins, in plaiſter of Paris.

Vand. Egyptian mummies, and ruſty coins!---no---ſhe can't be there, that's certain: and I ſhall be forced to run the gauntlet throughout the whole range; from the wing of a butterfly to the proboſcis of an elephant.

Sir John. Nay, Mr. Vandercrab, no receding ---I know you are a heretic, with regard to the works of nature!

Vand. There you are miſtaken, Sir John: I have no quarrel with the works of nature, if the fopperies of art did not ſpoil them.

Sir John. Well, well; art and nature together, I am miſtaken if you don't find ſomething in that cabinet that will ſurprize you; for, *entre nous*, I have lately added a Venus to the collection

tion that I may ſafely venture to term an *unique*: old, old as the creation, Sir! *Allons donc*---a peep for curioſity, and a bottle afterwards, for old friendſhip's ſake, I am determined.

Melv. (*To* Vandercrab, *who is going to the other door*) Where are you going, Sir?

Vand. Why, home to be ſure. 'Slife! I would not be plagued with that coxcomb and his *unique* ---to reſcue my whole family——

Melv. Yet, hear me, Sir.

Vand. (*Peeviſhly*) Well, Sir--- (*They retire and confer together*).

Servant *enters, and whiſpers* Sir John.

Sir John. (*Looking towards the cabinet*) How! a lady, do you ſay?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Sir John. Uneaſy, leſt ſhe ſhould be ſurprized ---hid in the cabinet---my life for it, the dear little rogue that ogled me ſo long at the Opera! What ſort of a lady? Hey!---tall---fair---blue eyes?

Serv. Yes, Sir.

Sir John. She is ſafe! ſhe is ſafe! (*Exit. Servant*) Now if this ſhould be la petite Sophie, repentant of her cruelty, and willing to accept the proffered ſettlement. A moſt intereſting adventure, egad! (*Takes ſnuff affectedly and looks at the door, while* Melville *and* Vandercrab *advance.*)

Melv. Matters thus far carried, Sir, let us at leaſt have demonſtration.

Vand. What! that we are fools? You may if you pleaſe; it is pretty clear on my part already, or I ſhould never have been here---Why the puppy laughs at us, I tell you.

Melv. (*Obſerving* Sir John) Laughs! 'Sdeath I can contain no longer; there's villainy in his face.

(Advancing) Sir John, we are indebted to you for the candor of your offer; and in juſtice to the lady's reputation, eſteem ourſelves bound to accept it. *(Offers to croſs)*

Sir John. (*Preventing him*) Perhaps ſo, Sir; but matters are a little altered ſince I did myſelf the honour of making you that offer.

Melv. Altered, Sir!

Sir John. In a word, Gentlemen, I have changed my mind.

Vand. That's rather unlucky, Sir John; becauſe we have not changed ours.

Sir John. No admittance here, however---'pon honour.

Melv. (*Laying his hand on his ſword*) Take care, take care, Sir John, this groſs and pitiful duplicity is a ſufficient conviction of guilt.

Sir John. How, Sir! inſulted in my own houſe?

Vand. Now, in my humble opinion, one's own houſe is the ſafeſt place to be inſulted in.

Melv. An inſult, Sir John, I ſcorn! but be aſſured, that in the cauſe of Miſs Harley's honour, it is not your age, your rank, nor even my near connection with you, that ſhould prove a ſafeguard.

Sir John. (*With great ſurprize*) Your connection with me! Why, pray, Sir, who may you be?

Vana. Oh! your ſon I dare ſwear! this is a very clever fellow, Sir John; and has a facility at finding fathers in every quarter of the world.

Sir John. Mr. Vandercrab! you are my old friend; upon my honor then, I do not know Miſs Harley to be in this houſe; as to my reaſons for guarding that door, it is certainly rather hard upon a man of gallantry to be obliged to avow theſe little arrangements; but come a little nearer---to tell you a ſecret---there *is*---a lady in that apartment.

Vand. What! Sir John, after all theſe——

Sir John.

Sir John. Softly, my good friend, ſoftly---you'll ſhatter her nerves! Who the ſweet little angel may be, I am yet to learn.

Melv. There *is* a lady!

Sir John. *(Angrily)* Yes, Sir---There is a lady; and if that is not ſufficient, remember there is a gentleman too.

Melv. *(Drawing, offers to paſs him)* I mean to convince myſelf of both, Sir John.

Sir John. *(Drawing)* Say you ſo, Sir? nay then———

Charles *enters, and beats down their ſwords.*

Cha. Swords! 'Sdeath, are you mad?

Miſs Vandercrab. *(Runs out between 'em)* Ah! ah! ah!

Vand. Letty, by this light!

Melv. Miſs Vandercrab!

Sir John. The *old* woman!

Vand. Here's a ſweet little angel for you! Why, Letty, who ſhould have ſuſpected *you* to be the fair diſgracer of our family at laſt? Truly it was very diſintereſted of you to inform againſt yourſelf.

Melv. Pray, Sir John, is this your Egyptian Mummy, or your extraordinary piece of ruins in plaſter of Paris? Upon my word, it's in very high preſervation.

Miſs Van. Sir John, when I have recovered the confuſion attending this little———

Sir John. Fire! and furies! When I have recovered it you mean, Madam. Give me leave to———

Vand. Softly, my good friend---ſoftly---You'll ſhatter her nerves. Come, come, never be caſt down man: virtuoſi, you know, have variable taſtes; and the only difference is, that your cabinet of curioſities is likely to be converted into a cloſet of antiques.

Cha. You are a man of honour, however doubtleſs, Sir John; and ſince the lady's fame muſt be the ſufferer, I dare ſwear you intend to make the beſt reparation, by marrying her.

Sir John. Marrying the devil, my Lord! What d'ye mean? Gad I think my fame will ſuffer the moſt of the two.

Miſs Van. When you have blunted the edge of your wit, Gentlemen, I fear you will have occaſion to try that of your ſwords again. This I think will bear witneſs, that Sir John's apartments have contained, at leaſt more than one Lady (*produces* Miſs Harley's *fan*) The prettieſt fan I think; --*French, I preſume.* (*Spreading it, and curtſeying to* Melville).

Melv. By heaven, Miſs Harley's fan!---Nay then my fears are realized.

Cha. (*Aſide to* Melville) A moment's patience, Melville. My heart beats high to the voice of nature, and teems with a thouſand painful explanations:---to clear Miſs Harley's fame, I muſt avow myſelf her deliverer from this houſe, where, to the reproach of Sir John----but here comes a better pleader.

Miſs Harley *and* Lady Charlotte *enter.*

Melv. (*To* Miſs Harley) My Sophia!

Cha. Lady Charlotte too! I cou'd have ſpared that.

Lady Char. Arrived in a moſt ſociable hour, I think; pray, Sir John, is all this good company aſſembled to take a peep at your Venus?

Vand. Yes, and a peep we have had; tho' with ſome difficulty it muſt be owned.

All. (*Laugh*) Ha! ha! ha!

Cha. (*To* Miſs Vandercrab) Come, Madam, the laugh is againſt you: let me therefore recommend——

Miſs Vand. No, poſitively, not a ſyllable of recommendation; I diſclaim your odious ſex, and am determined henceforward——

Cha. To adopt the firſt virtue of your own I hope, Madam, indulgence; though, give me leave to add, that this Lady (*pointing to Miſs* Harley) is amidſt the few who will never have occaſion for it.

Vand. (*To himſelf*) 'Slife! I do not know what there is in the ſound of that fellow's voice, that gives me a ſtrange ſort of a——

Cha. Let the occurrences of to-day convince *you*, Sir John, that the littleneſs of vice is its puniſhment; nor do the ſhafts of deriſion ever deeply wound 'till barbed by our own follies.

Vand. (*Still peeping at* Charles) And there is an odd cut too about his face, that, I think, I have ſeen before---I will ſpeak to him. Pray, Sir---

Cha. (*With reſpect*) Sir.

Vand. What the Devil ſhall I ſay though?

Cha. Oh Melville! (*Aſide*)

Melv. Courage, Man!

Vand. Pray, Sir, as there are ſome of us here, that do not exactly know who we are, may I take the liberty of aſking who you *ſuppoſe* yourſelf to be?

Lady Char. That, Mr. Vandercrab, I believe, *I* can inform you. Be not ſurpriſed, Charles; you are but one amidſt ten thouſand who daily deceive themſelves, while they ſuppoſe they are deceiving others.

Cha. Charles! Nay then, I have not even the poor merit of a diſcovery. And though kneeling for your benediction, Sir, ſcarce dare I ſolicit your pardon; ſince, how can I hope it after trifling with paternal feelings, when my own, though thus long blunted, overwhelm me?---My Father! (*Kneels*)

Vand.

Vand. Do prithee get off your knees, and give me a hug, my boy. Yes, yes, *you* are Charles ſure enough---But plague of your long ſpeeches! If I had not a better witneſs here than your word, or your mother's, young gentleman, after all that has paſſed, I ſhould not take either.

Cha. If farther teſtimony is neceſſary, Sir, here comes one whom I believe you will not doubt.

Enter Medley.

Mr. Medley, I rejoice to ſee you.

Med. (*Shaking his hand*) What, Charles, my boy! where have you dropt from at laſt?

Vand. Why the moon, I ſuppoſe.

Cha. A little lunatic, I muſt confeſs---But lovers and madmen are privileged perſons; or rather they are the ſame; and as the hope of pleaſing that Lady (*pointing to Lady* Charlotte) was the cauſe of my error, it is juſtly, and, perhaps, ſufficiently puniſhed in the bitterneſs of the diſappointment.

Sir John. And pray, Mr. what d'ye call'um---Mr. Charles, ſince you are *not* Lord Melville at laſt, where may his Lordſhip be at preſent?

Melv. At your elbow, Sir John, Charles and I have made a little free with each others names, but as he ſeems diſpoſed to part with mine, I think it will not be amiſs, to reſume it.

Vand. (*To Charles*) And ſo, young Man, you have really had the confidence——

Med. Come, come, my good friend---let me interfere. I think, I ſee ſhame and regret enough in Charles's face to inſure his future conduct; and let me tell you, that if Ladies encourage none but fine Gentlemen, and Fathers value none but men of buſineſs, they both ſtand a chance of creating faults, that neither may have influence enough to remedy.

Melv.

Melv. Spoken like an oracle! Give me your hand upon it. You and I, Mr. Medley, began with hoſtilities---but as the matter ſtands, let us e'en forget and forgive by way of example. Mr. Vandercrab I hope you too are, by this time, convinced, that I am not quite ſo blood-thirſty as you ſuppoſed me. Take my word for it, therefore, when I aſſure you, that you are the father of a very worthy young fellow. I know him well---His worſt fault is love---and that, I ſuppoſe, you may eaſily cure him of.

Cha. (*Angrily*) How, Melville!

Vand. Aye, eaſily do you ſay?

Melv. Very eaſily, Sir. Marry him---Oh! it is done every day---

Vand. Gad and ſo it is---Well, well, young man, I can't find in my heart to croſs you on this occaſion, and therefore I expect you will return the compliment your whole life after. But what ſays the lady?

Lady Char. Your ſon, Mr. Vandercrab, ran the riſque of incurring your diſpleaſure to obtain a heart, which I muſt unwillingly confeſs, was not then mine to beſtow.

Cha. How, Madam! this is indeed a misfortune——

Lady Char. Of which you are ſo blind as even yet to perceive but half, Charles---For it extends even to that formidable cataſtrophe!——

Melv. (*Laughing*) Matrimony!

Cha. (*Looking alternately at her and* Vandercrab) Heavens! is it poſſible! my gratitude——

Vand. Will I hope be ſincere enough to prove itſelf by your conduct.

Melv. A generous forgiveneſs, Mr. Vandercrab; and I may venture to pronounce, from my own feelings, that it will be generouſly acknowledged. For the error of Charles's paſt conduct, I confeſs myſelf chiefly accountable, and if to

bluſh

bluſh for it be any atonement, I am not aſhamed to add that you have taught me to do ſo.

Cha. Sir John, your hand.

Melv. And now, Miſs Harley.

Miſs Har. My Lord, we have yet many errors to rectify.

Lady Char. In the interim, dear Sophia, forbear to add one to the number by affectation, and therefore generouſly compleat the happineſs of your friends.

Vand. Well, I believe you are an honeſt fellow ---tho' you are a Lord, and ſo I venture to join your hands; unleſs, indeed, his lordſhip prefers Letty here!

Miſs Van. No, I reſign all pretenſions: and ſince our miſtakes are cleared up, and you are really to be Lady Melville, child, as a proof of my good will, I intend you ſhall have the honour of chaperoning me into public next winter.

Lady Char. Henceforward, Charles, I hope I ſhall always have ſenſe enough to reſpect that community whoſe members form the vital principle of a commercial ſtate. Amidſt the various transformations of the day, therefore, do not let the rareſt be forgotten---A woman of *Ton* transformed into a woman of reaſon.

Vand. Transformed into an angel!--Od, you are a ſweet little ſmiler, and I'll be---no---I won't be a coxcomb to oblige you either; for the future, however, my young friends, we will ſhare the office of cenſor amidſt us: and in the exerciſe of judgment, may all preſent reſolve, like *me*, to remember INDULGENCE!

THE END.

EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Miſs FARREN.

WELL, here I come, my Sex's Right to claim,
Who by Loquacity aſpire to Fame:
The laſt Word ever was a Woman's Rage,
And prudent Poets grant it on the Stage;
Our Curtain Lectures ſurly Spouſes bear,
And Beaux unmarried take a Sample here.
And yet, methinks, our Author of To-night
Might well the boldeſt Friend to Hymen fright.
What!—raſhly bid each Parent claim his Child!
How could ſhe venture on a Thought ſo wild?
A Comedy ſhe calls the Piece too!—fye!
I rather think ſhe means a Tragedy:
For ſay, what direful Scenes muſt ſoon ariſe,
Should ev'ry Parent learn to doubt his Eyes?
Or ſome ſtrange Magic ev'ry Son inſpire
In wicked Days like theſe to claim his Sire?
What civil Wars!——but hold——ſuppoſe my Fan
For one Half Hour this dangerous Taliſman:
(Waves it) Before its Magic Pow'r what Crowds retire!
Peer, Ruſtic, Merchant, Alderman, and 'Squire!
I ſee them ſtruck at once with wild Affright;
I ſee—I ſee them—tho' they're not in Sight!
Here, hopeful Fathers ſtand without a Son;
There, Batchelors—by Families undone!
A ſtrange Contraction ſeizes well-turned Locks,
And, in a ſnug round Curl, Beaux mount the Box!
While unplumed Toaſts—now Toaſts, alas! no more,
Contented dreſs thoſe Caps which once they wore.
Are there who angrily the Portrait view?
Ah, let them turn to Life, and own it true!
Mark that rank Soil where Vice or Folly thrives,
The careleſs Huſbands and the faithleſs Wives:
Then bid ſome favouring Genius once again
Deſcend and bring the Virtues in her Train;
Bring ſome fair Gift by Magic Touch refined,
Which more than Bond or Settlement may bind;

And

EPILOGUE.

And ſoft—ev'n now I've found the precious Spell,
'Twas from the brilliant Eyes around it fell!
'Tis Love—of every Tie the certain Teſt;
Secure the Charm and bind it to your Breaſt!
Without it, Marriage Vows are Dicers Oaths;
And Folly ſullies what Affection loaths.
Then ſeize the Hint, adopt the generous Paſſion;
Bid Doctors Commons be no more in Faſhion;
Guard what the trueſt Conſtancy imparts,
And ſince your Eyes deceive you——truſt your Hearts.